WORLD CHAOS OR WORLD CHRISTIANITY

HENRY SMITH LEITER

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WORLD CHAOS OR WORLD CHRISTIANITY

A POPULAR INTERPRETATION OF
OXFORD AND EDINBURGH
1937

By HENRY SMITH LEIPER

WILLETT, CLARK & COMPANY
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FOREWORD

As many of the Christians of the world are aware, two highly representative councils of church delegates from forty-five countries — practically the whole of non-Roman Christianity — met at Oxford and Edinburgh in the British Isles during July and August, 1937. More than a solid month of meetings, with many subdivisions for the consideration of specific questions, produced a mass of material of which much deserves to be made permanent. As a matter of fact, the major findings and accounts of the general proceedings of both conferences are available. The present brief survey therefore is not intended to be exhaustive, or simply factual, or even chronological. It is only the attempt of one who was intimately connected with both conferences to describe their outstanding characteristics and to sum up his chief impressions of days spent in memorable fellowship with many men of many views who nevertheless were — as the affirmation which crowned the work of the Edinburgh Conference asserts — " conscious of a unity which is deeper than all their divisions."

These words are being written on the Scotch Isle of Skye, which for variety and beauty of scenery is unrivaled anywhere in the world. He who would attempt to describe it knows at the outset that nothing he can say will be adequate. His impression of the place is gained through his own limited faculties, and he remembers only what has imprinted itself deeply on his consciousness. He can take but one path at a time and even if he could make others see all its beauty he would know that he had missed many other paths equally beautiful and inspiring.

This is a symbol of some of the limitations of which I am acutely conscious as I set out to share with friends who did not have the privilege of attendance something of the inspiration and enlightenment which came to us all at Oxford and Edinburgh. If what is written here encourages any to further study of the actions of these great councils of the church, and leads, even to a small degree, to increased consciousness of world unity among the followers of our Lord — over against an ever more hostile world which presents rival claims to man's supreme loyalty — I shall feel more than repaid for the effort involved in preparing the chapters that follow.

HENRY SMITH LEIPER

WORLD CHAOS
OR
WORLD CHRISTIANITY

FÉDÉRATION UNIVERSELLE DES
ASSOCIATIONS CHRÉTIENNES D'ÉTUDIANTS
13, RUE CALVIN, GENÈVE

I

OXFORD AND EDINBURGH IN LONDON TOWN

STANDING on the broad front steps of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, early on the evening of July 29, 1937, I witnessed a scene which not even a hardened sightseer would soon forget. Up the slope from Ludgate Circus streamed a great company of people whose dress made it plain that they came from many nations. They were all bound toward the top of the hill, where for more than thirteen centuries a Christian church has stood. On every hand the sidewalks were thronged with curious crowds who watched quietly from every available vantage point. Handsome, courteous London "bobbies" kept order, but their task was an easy one, for the onlookers, though their interest was obvious, readily cleared a path for those who were on their way to the cathedral. Above the voices of the people rose the chiming of bells, ringing their changes under the hands of enthusiastic English bellringers.

A hush of expectancy, and all eyes turn toward the approaching procession. First comes a coach magnificent in red lacquer and gold, in which ride the formal attendants of the Lord Mayor of London; then the Lord Mayor himself, wearing his robes of office and sitting in his splendid state coach. The Prime Minister of England follows on foot, and after him march the leaders of the churches of forty-five lands, a company in colorful ecclesiastical costume, in gowns and hoods and sashes fashioned after the tastes and traditions of all parts of the globe.

The ends of the earth are literally met together. The Japanese Bishop of Tokyo marches near the head of the group that represents the Russian Church in Exile. The head of the United Church of South India is to be seen along with the primates of the Church of England, the archbishops of Canterbury and York. The president of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America walks near the Archbishop of Thyateira. The chairman of the Evangelical Church Council of France leads the primates of Denmark and Sweden and a half dozen other lands whose churches are established by the state. The moderator of the United Church of Canada and other moderators of Presbyterian and Congregational churches all round the world are there, with Mar Shimun of the Ancient Assyrian Church and Mar Thoma of the Syrian Church in India.

Bishop Perry of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America is one of a group from the New World. Near him walk the leaders of both the Northern and Southern Baptist conventions; of the Augustana Synod and of the United Lutheran Church; of the Methodists and of the Disciples; of the Friends and of the Old Catholic Communion. Dr. Timothy Tingfang Lew of Yenching University, a member of the legislative council of his nation, leads a company of eminent Chinese churchmen whose stature and attire contrast with those of tall Dean Brilioth of the University of Lund in Sweden. Great missionaries march beside great laymen — men whose names are known around the world for their distinguished services in government and business — ambassadors, ministers of state, judges, educators, bankers, merchants, scientists and physicians.

There are women too — Mrs. Fred S. Bennett, Mrs. Harper Sibley, Miss Dorothy Fosdick, Mrs. Harrie R.

Chamberlin, LL.D., Miss Eliza H. Kendrick, Ph.D., Miss Mary A. Dingman, Mrs. Henry Hill Pierce, Miss Anna V. Rice and Miss Ruth Woodsmall. The presence of women in such a formal ecclesiastical procession was in itself significant — although their small number seemed to support the mistaken idea that the church has no places at the top for members of the fair sex!

The long procession winds across the central plaza and disappears into the cathedral, thronging the vast nave, the transept, the choir, the galleries, and presently overflowing through the doors. Within, the ushers are busy trying to find room for these thousands of worshipers. The ushers themselves are the youth delegates and official visitors to the two conferences. They have come from Algeria, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Great Britain, Ireland, Greece, Holland, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Rumania, the Russian " diaspora " in exile, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States!

For fifteen hundred years London has harbored ecclesiastical gatherings, but never before had it watched so representative an assembly as this. And never before had Christians come from so many lands to worship on this site which was consecrated to the service of God in Christ eight hundred years before Columbus discovered America. I have been in hundreds of cathedrals and have attended festal services in at least a dozen parts of the world, but the throng that had come together in this huge church overwhelmed me. When they stood to sing Martin Luther's hymn the sound was like " rushing, mighty waters."

The service began. In the sanctuary leaders of various communions took part in the service, which led up to the

sermon preached by the venerable Archbishop of Canterbury, Cosmo Lang.

The archbishop took as his text these words: "And the Lord said unto Moses: Wherefore criest thou? Speak unto the people that they go forward." What he said was as memorable as the setting. When we are dismayed at our difficulties in trying to unite all branches of the Christian church, he said, we do well to remember that Moses came to know the certainty of God's plan even when he could not see the way ahead. Our goal may be distant but the immediate road is plain and we must follow it steadily. No man who has seen the vision of a united Christendom can ever abandon the quest. Oxford has proved that our common Christianity is a great and inspiring reality capable of becoming a mighty redeeming force in the chaotic world.

Differences cannot be overcome by simply ignoring them; but if we build upon the central faith which we hold in common we will see these differences in their true proportion. Our growth into union is to be by way of unity; and such growth is really growth "into Christ," as Paul would have said. The source of unity is not the consenting movement of men's wills but the eternal purpose of God. Just in proportion as we find in Christ our one center shall we grow into him and, as individuals or churches, grow together. In view of such a purpose — God's and ours — delegates to such gatherings as those of Oxford and Edinburgh must regard themselves not as recipients only but as trustees of a creative experience.

In characterizing the trends in the ecumenical movement as a whole the archbishop declared two features noteworthy: the recognition of the place of common worship — since in worship men know themselves to be at one in prayer and in silence — and the new emphasis upon the importance of the church as the instrument of the kingdom.

The movement represented by the conferences of Oxford, Edinburgh and Hangchow (this last planned for 1938) is more important than any single manifestation of it — and the church as a whole has not yet realized how significant it is. We cannot doubt but that through it God is reuniting his broken church; and through such practical activity as is rendered possible by a council of the churches we are making ever more visible the unity which we hope some day to see consummated.

As the aged primate finished there was a deep hush, more impressive and inspiring than any sound could have been. Then the organist began playing the familiar hymn, " Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty! " and the worshipers sang it, in many languages but with one spiritual voice. There followed an act of invocation led by the Indian Bishop of Dornakal, an act of penitence led by Archbishop Eidem of Sweden, an act of intercession led by Dr. Cockburn of the Church of Scotland, and an act of adoration led by the Eastern Orthodox Archbishop of Thyateira. Then came the Te Deum — sung like the hymn in many languages simultaneously — swelling in mighty chorus to the final lines, " O Lord, let thy mercy lighten upon us as our trust is in thee. O Lord, in thee have I trusted: let me never be confounded."

As the long procession wound its way out of the cathedral into the early twilight of London I found myself asking questions and answering them as best I could. How and why were all these gathered here from the ends of the earth, obviously at great cost of time and money? And what was really their common interest? Their common interest, I felt sure after personal contact with them, was the unity of Christ's church. Their common concern was lest its weakness in the face of the threats of its modern rivals be increased by its internal divisions. Their common objec-

tive, as the Archbishop of Canterbury had said, was to find the ways by which Christians of all kinds could work together, grow together, and ultimately achieve the reunion of Christendom in a church whose witness and work would, more nearly than ever in the past, approximate the witness and incarnate the spirit of its common Lord. They had come to London, at the invitation of the archbishop and the Dean of St. Paul's, to worship together and symbolize in one great public service something of the spirit and hope in which they had met and were again to meet in council.

Although chronologically this service came after the Oxford Conference and before the Edinburgh Conference, there is good reason for beginning my account with it. The middle is often a good starting place: from it one can work both backward and forward. And in this case the link between these two parts of what is really one movement bears witness to that essential oneness. This was doubtless the last time these two bodies would meet as separate and autonomous entities, and so the service in St. Paul's may well have been prophetic as well as symbolic.

But what lay behind the calling of this meeting — what indeed is the movement of whose common interest and concern it was an evidence? In order to find the answer let us glance at Christian history both ancient and modern and recall certain relevant facts.

" I am the light of the world," said Jesus to his followers. That is but one of the many sayings in which he implied that the whole world was the natural object of concern for those who came in contact with his universal spirit and tasted something of his experience of the all-inclusiveness of God's love for mankind. Conscious of the inclusive character of the new faith, those who composed the church

during the early centuries formed the habit of appointing from time to time representatives who might gather to think and plan collectively for the difficult task which was theirs, namely, "to make disciples of all nations." These councils had a certain quality of which all those connected with them seem to have been aware; and the Greeks had a word for that quality: they called it "ecumenical"—that is, pertaining to the whole household of the faith, inter-racial, supra-national, supra-denominational, complete. Because of the strong sense which pervaded the early church of the importance of keeping Christianity undivided and ecumenical it was possible for observers to say that "the Christians hold the world together."

This quality has been so little in evidence during recent centuries, particularly since the Reformation, that many Christians do not even understand the idea of the ecumenical church. And of course they do not know or use the word which the Greeks used. Not that they have any other word; they haven't, and they don't feel the need of one just because they have so tragically missed the whole idea and have accepted as a matter of course the divided and scattered church whose racial, class, national and denominational lines cut back and forth across the world in every direction.

Under the guidance of God's Spirit the last thirty-odd years have witnessed, throughout the churches of the world, the gradual growth of a new desire for a truly ecumenical expression of the spirit of Christ in communion and fellowship. After strenuous efforts to overcome all manner of indifference and difficulty and in spite of repeated failures and discouragements, from 1900 on, with increasing frequency, there have been held in different parts of the world conferences that more and more approximated ecumenical representation and were drawn from the whole household

of the living church. Of these the most notable, from the point of view of creative impulse toward fuller unity, was held in Edinburgh in 1910 and dealt with the church's mission to carry its witness to all mankind. Its conception of the churches' collective responsibility for spreading the gospel led to the formation of the International Missionary Council. The most widely representative conference and the first to bring the great Eastern Orthodox communion into touch with the Anglican and Reformed (Protestant) world in general was successfully called at Stockholm in 1925 after nine earlier attempts of the same sort had failed. The Stockholm Conference was concerned with unity in Christian life and work, the practical side of cooperation being considered more than the philosophical, theological or organizational sides. The most nearly official conference and the one most concerned with the actual unity of the church in its faith and organization — its "order" — was that held in 1927 at Lausanne, known as the World Conference on Faith and Order. It was separated by only a year from the conference in Jerusalem which carried forward the missionary task envisaged at Edinburgh.

Here we have three bodies — the councils on missions, on life and work, and on faith and order — all partly ecumenical (none can be fully ecumenical which does not actually include the *whole* of the church throughout the world) and all so constituted as to be able to call world gatherings from time to time. But 1937 marked the first attempt of all three to plan together for something still more united and representative. It was, therefore, clearly not accidental that the two world conferences of 1937 met in the British Isles within one week of each other and held certain joint sessions in London. One of these conferences — that at Oxford — had to do with the church

in its relations to the state and the community or social order, and was called and managed by the body which had grown out of the Stockholm Conference, i.e., the Universal Christian Council on Life and Work. The other — that at Edinburgh — was the second world conference on faith and order and it was planned by the continuation committee appointed at Lausanne. " Life and Work " was anxious to have — and secured to a degree hitherto unknown — the cooperation of other world-wide Christian organizations in preparing for the conference. Thus the International Missionary Council, the World Alliance for Friendship through the Churches, the World Alliance of Y.M.C.A.'s, the Y.W.C.A., and the World Student Christian Federation, as well as " Faith and Order," all lent it assistance through their official staffs or otherwise.

Attempts were made to secure the cooperation of the Roman Catholic Church for both Oxford and Edinburgh. Although in the view of the leaders of that communion it was not possible for them to take part directly in either conference, the state of the church throughout the world and the growth of a more Christlike attitude toward their " separated brethren " did lead them to cooperate in certain invisible ways with the Oxford Conference studies and to address a significant message, couched in terms of warm friendliness, to the Edinburgh Conference. Of this more will be said later.

It is not my purpose here to review in detail the preparatory work for the conferences. But some understanding of the preparation is essential if one is to grasp the importance and significance of what happened. The primary thing to be made clear is that *neither conference was an event in itself,* detached and complete. Both conferences were, as I have indicated, part of the general movement for greater Christian unity which I shall refer to

hereafter as the "ecumenical movement" (and such it is as a matter of fact called by those most closely related to it, particularly in Europe).

The conference at Lausanne had agreed upon a common statement of the church's message to the world; it had made clear some of the major differences which keep the various communions apart; it had stimulated detailed study of possible reunion. Thus it had focused attention upon certain subjects as the basis of further discussion. From year to year its continuation committee had met in Europe, formulating in considerable detail the plan of work for the 1937 conference. Four commissions had been formed, each centering in a different part of the world and engaging the particular attention of competent students. Here in the United States, for example, Dean Wilfred Sperry of Harvard Divinity School led a distinguished group of scholars in the preparation of materials for the study of the church's unity in life and worship. Part of this work developed into a study written by Dr. Paul Douglass of New York, the most remarkable factual study yet produced of the many actual unions which have taken place all over the world between separate denominations. Incidentally it made very plain what were the practical things which could be done to promote and develop the desire for unity in advance of its actual consummation in organized life.

The other three commissions had worked for years in preparing the ground for fruitful discussion of such divisive matters as views of the ministry and the sacraments, the doctrine of grace, and the meaning of "word of God" as used by the different branches of the church. Long before delegates were appointed to Edinburgh a whole shelfful of scholarly books had appeared as a result of the work done in various lands by these commissions. Their work may sound theoretical and abstract to the ordinary layman but

anyone can see that it is intimately related to the basic ideas which constitute the church and that no progress can be made on the formal side of reunion until such matters have been made clear and an understanding has been reached as to what should be taught concerning them in the church of the future.

Perhaps I should point out here, as I did when presenting the opening statement at the Edinburgh Conference, that the place of theology in the life of the church can be ignored only at our peril. An illustration may help to make plainer why this is so. Suppose that a great bridge were to be built to connect two cities on opposite sides of a deep river. Bankers, real-estate men, traffic experts, river pilots, and politicians would all have to be consulted, as well as the engineers and designers. To discuss this work intelligently the engineers would have to agree on certain abstract principles of higher mathematics. All the stresses and strains, all the calculations of tensile strength, wind resistance and the like, depend upon certain applications of higher mathematics. But the other people interested in the bridge would not be at all interested in higher mathematics — unless it be the bankers. The real-estate men, the pilots, the politicians and the others would perhaps urge the engineers to get down to something practical and leave off their theorizing. Yet the mere fact that the relevance of the higher mathematical theories did not appear to the non-engineers would not make these theories unimportant.

Theology may not be exactly like higher mathematics, but it does represent the reflection of honest minds upon the mysteries of religious experience, and it does record their efforts to understand and explain as far as may be the facts of spiritual life and the laws of spiritual growth. That's why I would say that just as a bridge between two cities cannot be built without higher mathematics, so the

bridge between the different communions cannot be made without theological understanding.

And so it was that before the conference met in 1937 all the delegates received advance reports summing up the work done in the theological field during the ten years following the Lausanne Conference. All could, and many did, study these with care before undertaking to discuss their revision or submission to the churches as a basis for advance toward union on the technical and organic side.

I have spoken of the preparation for Edinburgh first because it actually began before the preparation for Oxford. Now let me describe briefly the process by which the program of the Oxford Conference was set up. World conditions in 1933 made it plain that a tremendous challenge to the church was arising in the development of what is known as the totalitarian state — one in which every aspect of life — ethical, educational, cultural, economic, as well as spiritual — is regarded as the direct concern of the political organization of the national state. The work of the research department of the Universal Christian Council after 1930 led directly to the consideration of this problem which emerged simultaneously in different parts of the world. By 1933 it was obvious to thoughtful observers that the world was approaching one of the great turning points in history, comparable in significance to the great change which took place at the end of the Middle Ages and gave form to our modern world. The prodigious expansion of the state's functions which had come about particularly as a result of the World War had made it necessary for every nation involved to control more and more of life. The new absolutism which ensued came to be recognized in Russia, Germany, Italy, Turkey, Mexico, and other lands as a definite if not always openly avowed substitute for the

Christian religion in the determination of ideals of both individual and collective conduct.

In the attempt during this critical period to follow out lines of action in common, the churches, as represented in the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work, discovered that among all the questions which they faced none was more central or fundamental than that of their relations with the modern state and with the secularized society from which the basic character of the state derives. Particular point was given to this discovery by the situation confronting the Evangelical Church in Germany as a result of the deliberate attempt of National Socialism to prostitute that church to the purposes and ideals of a " positive Christianity " which on inspection turns out to be no Christianity at all.

Now, at the very moment when it realized how desperate was the need for common thought and action, ecumenical Christianity found itself deeply divided by differences of interpretation of its message and its task. Deeper in many cases than the supposed differences of denomination were those concerning the nature of God, his relationship to the world of men, his purpose for mankind, and the consequent basic ideals of human conduct. The critical nature of the struggle into which the churches were moving on many fronts made it necessary that these underlying differences be frankly faced — not to create an interesting debate on the floor of a council, but to arrive at vital truth and to gain new strength for battle against forces which, if victorious, would doom the church either to perish or to undergo such transformation as would make it only the ecclesiastical arm of some racial or nationalistic group intent upon objectives quite other than those of the kingdom of God.

In 1934, at its meeting in Fanø, Denmark, the Universal Christian Council came to unanimous decision as to the

themes which should engage the representatives of the churches in a world conference on Christian life and work. Thanks to the generous hospitality of Oxford University, the place of the conference was later set in that famous town so closely linked with Christian history, and a distinguished son of Oxford, Dr. Joseph H. Oldham, long secretary of the International Missionary Council, was charged with the responsibility of planning and conducting the preliminary studies as well as the program to be followed in the conference.

In consultation with Christian leaders from many lands Dr. Oldham shortly decided on the main questions to be examined. These were, as I have suggested, determined not by abstract reasoning but by observing the actual trend of events in many parts of the Christian world. The concrete situations implied definite points of view. They were obviously dependent upon certain ideas and convictions, upon a philosophy or "ideology" — in religious terminology, a "theology." The primary question usually was: What is man himself intended to be? By what principles and purposes is his conduct to be controlled? What does he live and die for? All theories of the state were seen to depend finally upon certain assumptions concerning the origin and destiny, the nature and potentialities of man. And never has there been less agreement than at present concerning this basic question! Marxists say that man is wholly determined by the material forces of his environment. Hitlerites avow that race, blood and soil are what matter most in his destiny. Behavioristic naturalistic philosophers teach that he is but part of the animal world, subject wholly to elemental forces in instinct and impulse. Mussolini thunders his conviction that man derives the only significance he can have from his participation in the life of a nation. Humanistic philosophers now as in

the time of the Greeks find in man's reason the guide to his nature and potentialities.

Dr. Oldham and his associates therefore had to ask: "Is there a Christian understanding of man distinguishable from all of these? Is man's essential nature to be found in the fact that a word is addressed to him by a personal God, demanding from him a response, and thereby constituting him a person and calling him to a life of sonship and freedom and fellowship and service in a community of persons?" They were sure that the Christian church is committed by its central affirmations to the belief that the life of man finds its expression in a community of persons. God has spoken to man the individual and to mankind in community through his Son. "He has revealed himself through his Word. The word — used in the widest sense to include every form of self-expression — is the means whereby persons communicate with persons." Through our response to God's word we become responsible persons, bound to our fellows and united with them in a community ruled by love. "God bids us serve him as his free sons in the only way we can serve him — by ministering to the needs of our fellow men. What we do to them he accepts as done to himself. The love of God and the love of our neighbor are inseparable. . . . Therefore the church is the community of those who have been redeemed from a self-centered existence which is death, into the objectivity and freedom of a life of personal response to the demands of persons, a life of trust and loyalty, of faith and love."

Every doctrine that is clamoring for popular favor today Dr. Oldham and his fellow workers found to be directly or indirectly a denial of the essential Christian idea of man. Hitlerites deny it when they stress blood and soil and make man the product not of God's eternal and universal purpose expressed from above but of blind primeval forces pushing

him up from below. Fascists deny it when they see men as only the atoms from which the nation is compounded. Communists deny it when they stress man's primary need for economic goods and his determination by material forces. Freethinkers of the humanist type deny it when they demand for man, as an individual thought to be existent in his own right, the opportunity to develop his own "personality," unrestrained by any common standards or by the bonds which unite him to his fellows.

Almost as basic as the problem of the "doctrine of man," Dr. Oldham's committee discovered, is the question whether and in what sense God is to be found in nature and in human history. In theological language this is the old problem of natural and revealed truth, or of the natural and the supernatural as contrasted in man's experience. Connected with this, indeed growing out of it, is the question whether Christian experience is wholly spiritual and individual or whether it must find expression in material pursuits such as business and in society, both economic and political. There is food for thought in the fact that the church which has pressed most vigorously for the "otherworldly" or supernatural view of Christianity, namely the German Lutheran Church, finds its very existence challenged by a government which accepts its own estimate of its mission.

From this and other situations it became plainer than ever before that between man's personal life as a follower of Christ and the requirements of those institutions in which he has to live — the family, the race, the community, the state, the economic order — there is never ending tension. It is in this conflict, this opposition of forces, that the problems of what we call Christian social ethics arise.

But no careful consideration of this tension and its meaning could fail to bring the thoughtful Christian face to face

with the question whether the ideal of the kingdom of God is wholly otherworldly or whether Jesus intended that it should find at least partial expression in the world of human institutions. Again, is the kingdom something which is only given by God, something for which man should not and cannot hope to work? Or is the ideal to be actualized in the real through obedience and intelligence, in dependence upon God but likewise in reliance upon those powers which God has conferred upon man whom he has made "in his own image"? "How are we to distinguish, on the other hand," asked Dr. Oldham, "between such an attitude of reliance upon God and not on human effort, and a supine, and therefore unchristian, acquiescence in things as they are, such as would justify the charge that religion is the opiate of the people and the chief hindrance to their attainment of a fuller life in this world?"

In the attempt to set many men of many minds throughout the churches of the world to studying such questions, Dr. Oldham and the other officers of the Universal Christian Council traveled from nation to nation, organizing groups of students from various walks of life and from many communions. A surprisingly large amount of helpful and informative writing was the direct and indirect result of this effort. In fact, just before leaving the United States for Oxford, I placed all the new books which had to do with these subjects on a shelf by themselves in my library. There were three feet of them! The important point is not that there were so many books — "of the making of books there is no end" — but that a very large number of persons in more than a score of countries had been giving themselves religiously to out-thinking the enemies of Christ, preparing the intellectual ammunition with which to wage the struggle all felt sure would become more and more acute. A further significant fact was that all of this work

had been but preparation for the world conference in Oxford which was intended in turn to facilitate study and action among Christian leaders working in harmonious unity of plan, if not of organization, in the days to come. An almost equal number of volumes was available before the summer of 1937 as a result of preparations for the Edinburgh Conference.

Practical minds soon saw that if the church were to answer effectively the challenge of the modern age attention would have to be given not only to ideas but to organization. In consequence the bodies responsible for both the Oxford and the Edinburgh conferences appointed a committee of thirty-five carefully chosen persons to study the organization of the ecumenical movement as a whole and make recommendations for its future development. This task involved the review of existing organizations — some seven or eight, possibly nine, all in some sense ecumenical in plan and objective. It also involved the preparation of recommendations which could win the support of Christians from many nations and with very different church backgrounds.

Along with the studies I have briefly described and the appointment of the committee of thirty-five under the chairmanship of the Archbishop of York, there went a process of selection and training of delegates which was of great importance. The administrative body of each conference sent out invitations to the churches of the world far in advance of 1937 in order that the official bodies of the various communions might have time to consider carefully the selection of delegates.

In the case of Faith and Order there were only to be delegates appointed directly by the churches. In the case of Life and Work, however, because of the nature of the task

to be undertaken, provision was made for the appointment of certain specially qualified persons from the central organization of the Universal Christian Council. These were to constitute in all only one-fourth of the total membership of the conference. They came, of course, from many lands and from many communions and were men and women of definite and pronounced Christian conviction and connection. Thus in the larger sense they all represented the church, if not the official ecclesiastical organization of the churches.

That many individuals were appointed to represent their group at both conferences was inevitable; it was in fact desirable, since in this way the two main branches of the ecumenical movement were more closely knit together than would otherwise have been possible. Most of these delegates came of course from the Western world, where the Christian religion has been longest established and where the sheer bulk of church membership is greatest; but much thought and care were taken to assure that there should be in both conferences an adequate if not numerous representation of the younger churches of the Eastern lands. As the event proved, those who came were both well equipped and willing to take an active part in the work which they felt was quite as important for them as for their brethren of the older churches.

Thus was the ground prepared for the 1937 conference. We shall now look in at Oxford where the first of the two assembled.

II

OXFORD LISTENS

No one who knows Oxford need be told that it is an ideal town for a Christian conference. Twenty-one men's and four women's colleges maintain attractive and convenient quarters. Sir Christopher Wren's "Sheldonian," a curious circular assembly hall nearly three centuries old, which is used for all the great university functions, and the Town Hall, a modern structure, provide excellent facilities for large deliberative assemblies. St. Mary's, for six hundred years the university church, and Christ Church Cathedral, dating from the twelfth century, can hardly be surpassed as houses of worship. And these four buildings did in fact house all major meetings of the world conference which met there from July 12 to 26, 1937, although many other smaller churches and university buildings were used by special groups or commissions.

The conference filled the Sheldonian twice on the opening day — once for a preliminary business session under the chairmanship of Dr. John R. Mott of New York, and again in the evening for the formal opening of the conference under the chairmanship of Dr. Cosmo Lang, archbishop of Canterbury. In the earlier session, at which five delegates told what they anticipated of the Oxford Conference, it was of particular interest to hear Miss van Asch van Wijck, president of the World's Y.W.C.A., speak of her expectation, shared she felt by Christian women in every land, of a new realization of the relevance of Christ's teaching to the situation of the present day. Dr. Visser 't Hooft,

secretary of the World Student Christian Federation, upon being asked what youth expected of the conferences said that many alert young people hoped that Christian leaders who came to Oxford "would present Christianity as salt and not as sugar!" They felt, he said frankly, that the church is antiquated; and if they were Christian at all they wanted the reality of the fellowship of Christ's followers as it is pictured in the New Testament. "Let the church be truly the church of Christ and they will welcome it!" he concluded, and his words met with prolonged applause.

When the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke in the evening he was introduced by Principal A. D. Lindsay of Balliol College, vice-chancellor of the university, acting for the chancellor, Lord Halifax, who was unexpectedly prevented from attending. On the circular benches — without backs and decidedly uncomfortable despite the fact that they are the seats of the mighty in Oxford — I noted that the archbishop was encircled, quite accidentally, by a cross section of the contemporary church universal. First there were Dr. John Baillie of Edinburgh and Bishop Azariah of Dornakal, South India; then Dr. Robert Hopkins, secretary of the World Sunday School Association, who sat between Dr. J. H. Oldham of London, secretary of the International Missionary Council and chairman of the research department of the Universal Christian Council, and Dr. Bertrand Stevens, Episcopal bishop of Los Angeles, California. Bishop Perry, who presided over the Episcopal House of Bishops in the United States, was seated between Dr. William Temple, archbishop of York, and Dr. Marc Boegner of Paris, chairman of the French Federation of Churches. Then came Archbishop Germanos of Thyateira, representing the ecumenical patriarch of the Eastern Orthodox Church; Reverend M. E. Aubrey, president of the Federal Council of the Free Churches in England; Dr. Ashton Old-

ham, Episcopal bishop of Albany, New York, and president of the American Council of the World Alliance for Friendship through the Churches; and Dr. Henry Sloan Coffin, president of Union Theological Seminary, New York. Close beside Dr. Coffin I saw Bishop R. C. Ransom of Tawawa Chimney Corner, Wilberforce, Ohio, head of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He in turn was flanked by the Honorable Max Huber, former president of the International Tribunal at The Hague, and Frau Nathan Söderblom, widow of the late Archbishop of Sweden who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his part in the founding of the Universal Christian Council. Beside this charming lady, whom the assembly had honored earlier in the day on this the sixth anniversary of her husband's death, sat her son-in-law, Dean Brilioth of the University of Lund. In the next row appeared a no less representative group: Dr. William Adams Brown of New York, president of the Universal Christian Council and one of the chairmen of the Oxford Conference; Professor H. Alivisatos of the Greek Orthodox Seminary in Athens; William Paton of London, secretary of the International Missionary Council and editor of the *International Review of Missions;* President John A. Mackay of Princeton Theological Seminary; Dean H. P. Van Dusen of Union Seminary, New York; the Bishop of Chichester, England; and Father Bulgakoff of the Russian Orthodox Church in Paris, formerly a Communist, now a professor of economics. The last row, too, was varied and representative — Dr. Hans Schönfeld of Germany and Geneva, research director of the Universal Christian Council; Dr. Nils Ehrenström, his able Swedish colleague; Dr. Adolf Keller of Geneva, best-known of all ecumenical leaders; Dr. Allen Knight Chalmers, pastor of the Broadway Tabernacle, New York; and Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert, general secretary of the Fed-

eral Council of the Churches of Christ in America. Last, but even more significant as showing the wide constituency of the conference, I noted Dr. T. Z. Koo of China and Pastor Paul Nishida of Japan. The floor and the galleries of the queer old Sheldonian were filled to overflowing with these and a thousand more men and women from all but a few corners of the earth.

There was one very noticeable absence of which the archbishop spoke with regret — that of the delegates of the German Evangelical Church. Pastor Martin Niemöller of Dahlem parish, Berlin, who should have been present as a speaker, was languishing in a nazi prison. Of the others who had been chosen to represent the German church several were, like him, prisoners of a government which more than any other save Russia's in the modern world has sought to rid itself of the influence and ideals of the Christian religion. Those of the Confessional churchmen who were not under arrest had been deprived of their passports; and the remaining representatives of Germany's official church, while technically free to come, had been "advised" against coming by that government which on its rise to power had promised complete freedom and protection to both Protestants and Catholics.

Amid deep silence a telegram from the senior German Lutheran bishop, Dr. Marahrens, was read: "I send you brotherly greetings and good wishes upon all your proceedings. May it be granted to your meeting to answer great fundamental questions in the light of the Word of God." The conference at once voted to send a reply. I shall describe in due course what happened in that connection, for it illustrates dramatically an important aspect of the present church-state struggle.

Additional emphasis was given to the immediacy of the questions before the conference by the report of the re-

newed and bitter persecution by the Japanese government of Christians in Korea and Manchuria as well as in Japan itself. This persecution springs from the insistence of the militarists in control that the " shrine ritual " be made universally compulsory — part of the deliberate attempt to make emperor worship the center of the religious life of Japan and of those unfortunate lands whose people she has subjugated.

Against the dark background of these events the Archbishop of Canterbury described the reasons for which the conference had been brought into being. Referring specifically to Russia, Turkey and Germany, and the difficulties encountered by Christians in these countries as a result of the exaltation of the state to a position of paramount importance, he said that the survey of the facts made in " relentless honesty " by the conference committee under the able direction of Dr. Oldham was almost if not entirely unique in showing how widespread are the claims of the state to control human personality.

In view of this attitude on the part of the state, the archbishop continued, he hoped for a new interrelation to be established between Christian thought and action, preparing the way for a " united supra-national Christianity " which shall express itself through some permanent body recognized by all churches. The same relentless honesty is also needed in the presentation of the facts and the suggestion of possible responses to them. The church does not even understand the responsibility which lies upon it for asserting in the face of insistent denials its gospel of freedom and fellowship. It must take united action to liberate the good in this day of the unprecedented, diffuse, and subtle evil masquerading as the savior of men and nations. Candid with respect to the shortcomings of the church, the archbishop asked, " Can we speak without shame of the

acceptance by Christianity of social conditions glaringly out of keeping with it? " He pleaded with the delegates not to leave results " in the air " at Oxford. " While the church is the bearer of light," he warned, " it depends on the individual member whether that light will be diffused in the world or hidden." Individuals as well as organizations must lead the church, the community and the state nearer, if only by a few steps, to the holy city whose builder and maker is God.

Thus the opening hours at Oxford were not given to vague generalizations; nor were the days which followed. Addresses by eminent churchmen from many parts of the world made at full sessions during the first four days centered upon the major questions which confront the Christian world. And the way in which these speakers handled their subjects showed plainly enough that they had not forgotten the object of the conference — to combine faith and intelligence, to seek out agreements and define differences, to establish areas and methods of cooperation which would lend strength to the work of the individual church by relating it to the work of the church universal. No attempt to describe the conference would be complete without some report of these addresses. They were delivered in each case in the language of the speaker and a written translation was prepared in advance for those members who spoke another language, so that it was unnecessary to translate each address as it was delivered.

As was fitting, there came first a review of the progress of the ecumenical movement since the time of the Stockholm Conference. This was presented by Professor Runestam of Sweden, a son-in-law of Archbishop Söderblom, who was host to the 1925 conference and one of its principal founders. He noted the growth during these twelve years of those very dangers to the life of the church which had been

in the consciousness of the founders of the movement; but when the six hundred representatives from thirty-seven nations gathered in Stockholm there had only begun to appear (in Russia) the threat to the basic ideas of the Christian religion which has since been so enormously and so variously increased in nation after nation. Professor Runestam, feeling that there was danger in placing too great emphasis upon thought alone, urged upon the Oxford Conference a renewed concern for action in unison. In the message of the Stockholm Conference he saw a basis of general agreement which could be regarded as having undergone expansion and testing. All recognized, however, that this was but a beginning; and some, notably those who have come under the influence of the thought of Karl Barth and his school, consider it hardly the right beginning because of certain emphases which suggest that man and not God is chiefly responsible for the building of the kingdom, and also because they regard the kingdom as something to come not in this world but in the next. In his own personal experience, Dr. Runestam said, the living supra-national, ecumenical Christian community which at Stockholm was a distant vision had become a vital reality. That, he thought, — and all who have shared his experience will agree with him — is clear gain, not to be forgotten by those who have seen the many losses the world has sustained in these recent years of disillusionment.

Dr. Oldham was given eager attention and prolonged applause when he spoke on the meaning and possibilities of the Oxford Conference. He referred feelingly to the grim realities of unemployment and the resulting undernourishment and spiritual frustration. He pictured the inevitable consequences of the return to barbarism, a manifest characteristic of the day, and asked what relevance anything done at Oxford could have to a world which more than

ever is an armed camp filled with hostile groups bent upon the destruction of any who threaten the accomplishment of their selfish purposes. Simply to urge the men and women living at such a time to " be good " is futile. What they need is knowledge of the great fact that through Christ they have received power to become the sons of God and fellow helpers toward the eternal truth which must find expression in the community of the universal church. The question whether humanity will exterminate itself or climb to heights unimagined depends not on a declaration of new codes of action but on men's becoming more and more earnest in their devotion to the one Lord in whose service there is a unifying principle and a dynamic power for both individual and social living.

Dr. Hans Schönfeld, director of research for the Universal Christian Council, described the world-wide work of preparation, an outline of which has already been given, and indicated as only a person of his unusual training and insight could the lines of Christian thinking which will be most likely to bring about effective and united action. He believes that in the right relationship, faith and intelligence can do more for the Christian world today than any two other qualities — faith in the purpose and power of God and intelligence in the use of the great gifts which God has given to man through Christ and the church. Being a German with scholarly experience in social Christian activity in his own land before the rise of Hitler, Dr. Schönfeld is able, as not too many are, to grasp the complexity of the problem posed for the church by a state which itself seeks to become a substitute for the church. Since he now lives and works outside of Germany, Dr. Schönfeld enjoys a freedom such as none of his colleagues who must live and work inside the National Socialist state can any longer enjoy. Because of the emphasis which the totalitarian states

put upon a thoroughgoing ideology — winning by means of it millions of devoted and enthusiastic followers — it is clear, he thinks, that the church can expect to proceed only upon the basis of a genuine theology which is no less inclusive and just as definite in its implications as is the thought structure of any new philosophy of power. To act first and think afterwards may satisfy the impatience of eager Christians, but it is no substitute for a fundamental conception of Christian activity which must win and hold the followers of Christ if they are to "hold the world together."

What Dr. Schönfeld had been doing in Geneva in preparation for Oxford, Dean Van Dusen of the Union Theological Seminary, as secretary of the American advisory committee on studies and program, had been doing in New York. He was therefore the natural selection of the business committee as the person to discuss the American approach to the conference. He emphasized the expectancy and the perplexity of the American churches with respect to the problem of greater unity in Christian action, and went on to say that the transplanting of denominations to the United States brought with it every division existent in the Old World and, thanks to the inventive genius of the American, fostered a number of the new ones. Thus instead of having no church history — as is sometimes assumed to be the case — America has entirely too much. The numerousness of our transplanted churches and the variety of our denominations, Dean Van Dusen said, enable us to understand the history of the early church as it spread from the first motherland of Christianity, and lead us to believe that multiform expressions of the one faith can find federated more easily than organic unity. Certainly any unity which we in America can expect will proceed from a lack of uniformity or identity. Our idea, for example, of

the church and state as correlative, each free from the control of the other, is an indication of our refusal of the high authoritarian principle. American Christians however expect from world-wide study of church-state relations clear, concise and commanding results which will apply everywhere. We therefore must seek to bring to an ailing church a medicine for its needs, so that it may find the cure for a sick world. To fulfill this ministry, the dean added, three things are necessary: *a message* declaring in convincing form Christ's truth for our harassed social order; *persons* as the channels through whom new life will flow; and *an organized movement* to provide a corporate instrument for the growing consciousness of existing Christian unity. These should be sought by the conference.

Out of a wholly different background Professor Reinhold Niebuhr, a product of German Evangelicalism grafted into the stem of American Christianity, gave a characteristic "torrential" address in which he analyzed the deeper trends of the present day. He found the secret of the major tendency in the disavowal of the sacred which results from the dominance of all forms of secularism. Secularism, he said, glorifies the subrational. Even when it exalts reason it does so apart from God; indeed rationalistic humanism is a kind of modern prodigal son. It asks for its share of the inheritance — freedom, autonomy — and spends it in riotous living, destroying universality and winning tribal anarchy. A mighty famine came upon it — the World War. It emerged ready to maintain itself by preparing to kill its neighbors with borrowed money. Christian civilization has been the elder brother to this prodigal.

As a result of the failure of Christianity humanistic rationalism has produced, or rather revitalized, nationalistic religions such as we see in Italy and Germany. Such reli-

gion is the quintessence of sin since it feeds on the self-glory of man and the denial of the universal God. But it arose partly in protest against the profane use of the sacred — a kind of " taking the name of the Lord in vain," which is a sin of much of Christianity. Through Catholicism Christianity corrupted good religion into bad science and forced good science to appear as bad religion. The claim of a divinity attaching to the human organization of the church is another profanation. Many who have denied God have done so because those who claimed to represent him asserted that they actually held him captive and profaned his image in suffering mankind. But the church cannot incarnate God unless it is willing to go to the cross where supremely the incarnation becomes convincing. Protestantism, on the other hand, has not given the impression of being willing to climb Calvary. It has been smug and comfortable too often, profaning the sacred in its own peculiar way; it has itself tended toward secularism.

The Christianity of Christ, Professor Niebuhr concluded, today implies the preaching of repentance to a world which, rejecting the church, seeks to make itself God. Repentance is the only gateway into the kingdom of God — which men can *enter* but which only God can *establish*. We must try to discover what would be fruits meet for repentance. We can at least be sure that they will be the product of life in action and not of faith only. We want and the world wants no Christianity which does not have confidence in the relevance of love to all of life.

The last address of that first full day — and it was very full — was given by the Oriental secretary of the World Student Christian Federation, the brilliant, lovable and prophetic Dr. T. Z. Koo. I have known him and his work for fifteen years, beginning with the Peking Conference of

the federation in 1922, and have found in all the world few men who are his equals spiritually and intellectually. He began by saying that if the Christian West was just beginning to awaken to the dangers of secularist religion such as nationalism in its modern form, his own East, as a result of contact with the West, had long harbored a suspicion of this danger. The church's failure in the East is only a part of its failure throughout the world to hold up its own spiritual standards before society. Society is now dictating its own standards to Christians. Nowhere is this reversal of authority more painfully apparent than in the racial attitudes which are common to most Westerners. Attempts at unity have failed not only because of differences of philosophy or of theology but also because of the denial by our divisions of the universality of Christianity.

To the Eastern thinker culture is the web of attitudes and relationships which is woven around the three basic entities — God or heaven, the world, and man. If you know the fundamental ideas it holds concerning these three entities you know the fundamental culture of any people. In the West the trend of culture has clearly been to dethrone God as sovereign of life and to put man in his place. When that happens man loses what is certainly the only entity which in his heart of hearts he can regard as greater than himself. The frequent discussion in the Western world of the exchange of colonies as if they were commodities illustrates the loss of the sense of personality as a basic Christian conception deriving from the common fatherhood of God. After dethroning God and exalting himself in God's place, man has allowed the craving for material things and the fascination of creating them by the new techniques of science and art to subordinate all of life to material ends. Thus it is that everywhere man has made individual self-

interest rather than suffering love the ruling force in all of life's relationships.

It is because the church has been willing to accept for religion the status of one department of life among many, Dr. Koo asserted, that it has lost its hold on the true norm of appraisal for all life and social organization. When the church has made this surrender we must not be surprised if the state steps in and sets itself up as the ultimate organizing center. Community, which men must have for social life, cannot exist without some organizing center. Even unthinking men sense the reality of this need and therefore accept what the new totalitarian states offer them without realizing why they accept it or at what ultimate cost.

If you lose something the best way to find it is to search where you first missed it. The place where we must begin to search for our lost sense of the absolute sovereignty of God is the church, for it was there we first let it slip from the center of consciousness. But in looking backward we must beware of fixing our gaze too much upon the past with its mistakes; we must use the past as a springboard and not as a weight to hold us down.

By the time Dr. Koo had finished his address the delegates were ready for the change from the mood of strenuous thinking to that of quiet common worship. And what an experience it was to go from the modern Town Hall, where the full sessions were held after the first hours in the Sheldonian, to ancient St. Mary's Church! There for six centuries without interruption Christian worship has been held. The simple Gothic beauty of the nave with its clear windows and light gray stonework, the arrangement of the seating which enables a large congregation to feel a kind of intimacy ordinarily lacking in a church of like proportions, and the excellence of the acoustics which are aided by the

skilled and unobtrusive application of modern radio amplification — all worked together to provide a perfect setting for the hours of worship which began on that Tuesday afternoon at vespers and continued morning and evening throughout the conference.

It would not serve the purposes of this brief account to describe these services in detail, but I shall try to give a general impression of the part they played in the life of the conference. There were among the delegates many who felt and said that they derived more inspiration from the common prayers at morning and evening than from anything else during their stay in Oxford. The remarkable attendance of delegates at these regularly recurring periods of worship and intercession was in itself significant. Those who are familiar with great religious gatherings know only too well that in many instances " devotions " are regarded by a large number of the delegates as virtually free time; even if they do attend they expect nothing unusual and — perhaps in consequence — get nothing. Not so at Oxford. In those periods of silence creative changes were taking place in the spiritual life of all, and the attendance, good from the first, grew rather than diminished as the days passed. The leadership was naturally diverse. The ritual forms used were those of all the great Christian traditions save that of Rome. But the pregnant silence of united prayer on the part of worshipers representing every stream of tradition and practically all the nations of the world is something which must be experienced to be understood.

In one respect the worship services at Oxford were particularly notable; they were so designed as to bring direct spiritual reinforcement to the intellectual and ethical experiences of the conference — another case of faith combined with intelligence! For example, on the afternoon of

the first Sunday Dr. Oldham led an interpretative service which translated the work of the conference into prayer. Intercession was first conducted with the church throughout the world in mind, each nation being mentioned by name. Three specific petitions characterized the prayers: first, that through the moving of God's Spirit in the hearts of men there might take place throughout the world a release of new energies, finding expression in a multitude of different centers in naturally varied forms of spontaneous activity; second, that the church everywhere might acquire a growing consciousness of its own true nature as an ecumenical community; and third, that the eyes of Christians might be opened to recognize the truth to which the church is called to bear witness in the modern world and to the ways in which it is meant to serve God and man. These prayers for the church were followed by petitions for the guidance of God in the deliberations of the conference. At this point the chairman of each of the five sections stated what in the work of his section seemed most to call for prayer. In conclusion, the leader prayed that the grace and power of God might bring to living expression in the life of each member of the conference five things: first, a sense of their relation to him as creatures to the Creator; second, the spirit of penitence; third, the gift of forgiveness; fourth, the spirit of learning; and fifth, the spirit of confidence and hope.

If you consider carefully the content of that typical hour of devotions at Oxford you will see how closely it fits the needs of all Christians everywhere, and likewise how much more definitely it relates to the living needs of the contemporary Christian community than does many a service of prayer. It was but one admirable example of the manner in which the spiritual was linked with the practical.

Yet nowhere else than during these hours of devotion

was the tremendous difficulty of achieving Christian unity more clearly seen by those who were in a position to compare the attitudes of the different delegates. To those of the pronounced Protestant tradition much of the worship had a liturgical flavor which they found interesting but not convincing or helpful, while to the Anglo-Catholic and the Orthodox there appeared a dominant Protestantism which they felt ignored the riches of mystical communion as embodied in the elaborate liturgies of the ancient and undivided church. Indeed the reactions here were as striking and varied as were those to different presentations of Christian viewpoints on the platform. One man, who like the majority greatly appreciated the statement of Dr. Niebuhr to which I referred a few pages back, said to another: " There certainly could be no two opinions about that address! " " No," said his friend, " there could not indeed. It was terrible! "

What happened in the worship services was an illustration of the extent to which, all unconsciously, we become creatures of habit. We grow up to think of some one form as the proper one, forgetting that it has had a long history and an intricate evolution from different forms which antedated it. Particularly in times of deep spiritual experience the unfamiliar seems the unreal. We are most of us at some point or other like the Connecticut farmer who objected to daylight saving time because, as he insisted, it was not " God's time "!

The net effect of the Oxford worship services however was distinctly on the helpful and inspiring side. Along with all the differences there emerged a deep sense of common conviction and common dependence upon the one eternal Father in whom we all must live if we are to be true to our potentialities. Those services reached their high point in the communion on the last Sunday of the confer-

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ence when all baptized members of Christian churches, "whate'er their name or sign," were invited to receive communion after the Anglican rite at the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The memory of that hour will never fade from the minds of those who were present — that is, practically all the members of the conference excepting the youth delegates and associates who met for a similar service in St. Aldate's Church where the Bishop of Chichester officiated. At St. Mary's one of the assistants to the archbishop in celebrating the communion was Dr. Azariah, Bishop of Dornakal, India. I saw my Congregational colleague and friend, Theodore C. Hume, pastor of the New England Church, Chicago, receiving communion at his hands. Knowing of his long connection with India — where his family for four generations has contributed mightily to the conversion of the nation to Christ — I asked Mr. Hume to give me a record of that experience. This is what he wrote:

As I knelt at the communion rail in St. Mary's, at the memorable morning service on July 25, I suddenly realized that something of far greater significance was taking place than a visible symbolizing of that increasing spirit of Christian unity that had marked our Oxford Conference. As I looked up into the face of Bishop Azariah of Dornakal, South India, who was administering the sacrament to me, the curtain of the years was drawn aside on a dramatic moment, probably known only to him and to me. It was the full rounding out of a century — perhaps the greatest century — of missionary expansion in the history of the Christian church.

A sailing schooner, setting out from Salem, Massachusetts, in 1839 to round the Cape of Good Hope, carried in its small group of passengers my great-grandfather, Robert Wilson Hume, one of the earliest missionaries of the American Board to India. He never returned to his native shores, for after a long life of service in proclaiming the Christian gospel in India he died at sea on the voyage back to America. Four generations of the Hume family have spanned the century as witnesses to the spirit of Christ in India, preaching, teaching

and healing. And now, in this great service of dedication to the work of the world church, the cycle has come full round, and I am kneeling to receive the symbols of Christ's living body from the hands of the *first* Indian bishop, a leader of that Christian church, the fruit of the "missionary century" now grown so strong in the intervening years.

My imagination raced on, as I knelt in that brief moment, to include other divisions beyond those of geography alone. My forebears went to India in the name of the Congregational branch of the church of Christ, which I am happy yet to serve. How fitting that in the very year when significant efforts are being made to bring understanding and cooperation between the Episcopalian and Congregational churches of America I should be receiving the symbols of Christian unity from an Anglican bishop of India just as my great-grandparents went out in the free faith of their Congregational heritage. The "younger churches" of India and China have already made significant steps toward Christian unity. In this memorable service an Indian is, in a sense, returning the gift of the gospel with the added increment of a longing for unity that may, under God, in our time bear fruit of which we only dimly dream.

What was the Indian bishop saying to me? "The body of *our* Lord Jesus Christ. . . ." So indeed it had come to a new unity, transcending bounds of nation and race!

And the bishop, be it added, came of an outcaste family!

This account of the worship of the conference has been a digression from chronology. We must now go back and discover some of the further points of importance in the addresses made before the full sessions. These dealt not only with the significance of the church, its existence as an ecumenical society, its contemporary situation, and its relationship to the world of which it forms a part, but likewise with the worth and dignity of man as the Christian church sees him, whether he be of the clergy or of the laity.

With respect to the first of these themes it was essential

that the Protestant delegates secure some insight into the views of the ancient Eastern Orthodox Church. This insight was ably mediated by Professor Zankov of the great theological seminary in Sofia, Bulgaria, where I have had the pleasure of visiting him and observing his excellent work with the future leaders of his communion which, though it is little known to the Western church, numbers well over a hundred million.

Professor Zankov stressed the necessity of holding in balance two correlative truths. The first is that the church must proclaim God's word and provide the means of mediating his grace to the individual as well as to society. The second is that the church must be the center of action based on this word and empowered by this grace. All genuine Christian faith must be expressed, incarnated in life. It must be visible in one's relationship to the world and to one's neighbor; for although an ascetic attitude of *withdrawal* from the world is an evangelical principle it is not the same as an *escape* from the world. To *escape* is to deny one's Christian discipleship, to deny that our Lord when he became man truly entered into human history as its meaning and goal, to save, to overcome, to win and to bless the physical world. The Orthodox view is that he did thus enter into history. His incarnation has a cosmic significance. Through faith in that incarnation and through the power which it makes available in human life the Christian seeks to overcome the evil in the world as well as that which is within himself — so that the world, and he with it, may be set free for God's high purposes.

It follows from this approach that the mission of the church in relation to the family, the nation, the state, economic life, and all culture is to turn life toward the eternal values, ideals and aims which God intends. Yet this is not to say that the church is to take direct action in social and

political spheres. It provides a basis of judgment upon them all. It views them and enables the individual to view them in the light of the principles of the gospel of Christ. Its effectiveness in shaping society depends upon the fact that all of human conduct reflects the driving forces of certain attitudes of mind, the demonic and the divine. Here the church must fight its battle. It knows that the core of the demonic, the evil element in society, is the desire to be absolutely free from all restraint, wholly self-sufficient, sovereign. The secret of the kingdom of God, on the other hand, is the submission of the will of man to the will of God and a constant recognition of God's supreme sovereignty.

Thus the present world is involved in a tension such as has often existed in the past. It is not only a tension between the demonic and the divine, but also between the experience of the cross and the experience of the resurrection. It seems as if the Lord of history were once more setting the church universal in the situation of the early days in order that it may once more experience these tensions and confess Christ before the world even in martyrdom in order to win the world to saving faith. It is the very fact that so many Christians are unconscious of any tension or strain between the world and the kingdom of God that provides evidence of the secularization of the church in our time. To the degree that it has become secularized the church may be said to have missed its true function.

It was interesting to have this Eastern view followed by the presentation of one based upon wide experience in missions throughout the world. An English Presbyterian, William Paton of London, editor of the *International Review of Missions,* said that the true meaning and function of the church is often easier to understand where church life and development are still simple or even primitive. In a typical village in India, China, or Africa, for example,

community life is carried on by Christians as a completely related and integrated activity — as part of the life of the church, which to them is not only a center of worship but also the means of education, medical help, rural advance, and cooperative credit, and sometimes of justice as well. Their Christian experience centers in the church and radiates to include the whole of common life.

This is not, of course, true of the Western world. Many human activities once within the church have been progressively secularized and thus the fellowship of the church has come to be regarded solely as having to do with worship. As a society or community it is less real than a professional association or a trade union. Christian men in such a community may be troubled about what is the Christian way of acting in commercial relationships, but they have never learned to find help in such matters from other Christians within the church. This state of affairs is often accepted without question as if it represented progress toward the kingdom of God when in actual fact it may easily denote widening separation from it. The reality of the church as a fellowship truer, deeper, more binding and more real than all others will not be believed or understood until it finds expression all over the world within the ordinary social living of men.

This tendency of the West to break the fellowship of the church by forgetting that the people of the East have the same personal rights as people anywhere is complicated by the prevalence of racial prejudice and discrimination. Mr. Paton, and later Professor Walter Horton of Oberlin, spoke with great clarity and force concerning the acid test which is presented to the church in the Pauline principle that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek — or, to use Mr. Paton's rendering, " neither Aryan nor Semite." It was to me a peculiar coincidence that these solemn reminders of

one of Christianity's greatest failures and clearest challenges should have been uttered on the very spot where seven hundred years ago there stood a hostel for Hebrew Christians.

In this connection there came before the conference a special message from the Conference on the Christian Approach to the Jews held in Vienna, Austria, under the auspices of the International Missionary Council just prior to the Oxford Conference. This trenchant document calls anti-Semitism one of the " principal denials in modern life of the Christian doctrine of man," and declares that " it is an attack upon the unity of the one holy and universal church; it is even a denial of the person of Christ himself." The statement continues:

> It has been largely instrumental in aggravating existing economic and social strains until they have become intolerable. The human misery created, maintained, and at the same time concealed by the influence of anti-Semitism is difficult to estimate. Graver, however, than the volume of human misery is the poisoning of the spirit, the drying up of sympathy and the warping of judgment caused by the influence of anti-Semitism, especially among the young.
>
> The committee would further ask the conference to consider the terrible fact that this problem is not, like many the conference will consider, that of an influence external to the Christian church with which it must make its account, but also of an evil within the church. Anti-Semitism antedates Christianity and it is not suggested that it is a purely Christian phenomenon, but it is aided by false Christian teaching and it results in the appalling situation present in several countries where Christian churches are reluctant, or frankly refuse, to receive a Jewish convert. It is plain that where racial and physical conditions of church membership override the conversion of heart and will the Christian religion has ceased to exist except in a vain form. But this devitalizing influence is present within the church, not only in one country but in many and far more widely than is suspected.

The committee therefore begs the Oxford Conference to speak out clearly on the dangers of anti-Semitism to the church itself and to recognize openly the total impossibility of a church tainted with this form of racial absolutism bearing any valid witness to the word of God in the world.

Economic or interracial conditions can be changed only by great masses of Christians. Thus the thought of the conference was directed quite naturally to the question of the function of lay Christians within the church today. I heard it said — and I think with reason — that some of those who spoke of the function of the church were thinking simply of the function of the ministry. It was pointed out, however, by Dr. Oldham and others that if Christian witness is to be effective in social and political life it must be through the action of the men and women who are concerned from day to day with the conduct of governmental administration, industry, and the multitudinous affairs of common life. We cannot afford to forget that Jesus was quite as much the Christ when he was a simple carpenter engaged in the common round of his lay duties as he was when he fulfilled his public ministry during the last three years of his brief life.

That many have forgotten this fact was quite plain as one listened to the comments made by the " high church " type of delegate on the address of Dr. Justin Wroe Nixon of Rochester. Dr. Nixon sought to show what motives actually seem to operate in the lives of the individuals with whom the pastor comes in contact from week to week through participation in meetings of businessmen, in political campaigns, educational associations, service clubs, boards of philanthropy, and recreation. He had observed, he said, three elements in the attitude of the ordinary layman toward the church. First, there is a consciousness of a higher moral order expressing itself in life. Second, there

is a sense of superhuman power which is available to man. Third, these two elements are brought together in the concept of a God of love. It is Christ who brings all three into focus. The church must function in such a way as to express the higher moral order and reveal the superhuman dimensions of life. It must emphasize the view that wherever you have people relating their lives consciously to Christ's life and to the will of God as revealed in him, there you have a church. At the present time the major tests are to be met wherever people do not see the higher moral order — as for example in much of social and economic life. Thus the superhuman moral order expressive of God's will is not even remotely sensed in our great corporations. Yet our world is too interdependent to exist without this sense of what Bishop Gore used to call "the great human fellowship intended by Christ." As former Prime Minister Baldwin reminded the youth of the British empire, every compromise with the higher moral order leads straight back to the jungle. We are seeing everywhere the truth of that observation.

Therefore, said Dr. Nixon, the real crisis of the church today relates not primarily to its social program but to its faith. If that faith becomes clearer and is interpreted in its true implications for all of life the significance of the church will be reflected in the distinct difference between the consciousness of the lay Christian and the consciousness of those outside the church. God is calling us to a new inventiveness in expressing the divine nature within all human institutions. This inventiveness must be of God and not of man — since no one can create the ideal fellowship of Christlike individuals save God alone.

This same idea was expanded and applied by Dr. Oldham when he pointed out that our thought about the church and its functions has become greatly confused

through failure to recognize with sufficient clearness that the church must be regarded from two points of view. On the one hand it is a society organized for worship, preaching, teaching, and spiritual nurture. As such it is distinct from all other associations, whether economic, political, or cultural. On the other hand the church is a society of men and women who have been given a new understanding of life and have undergone a change which modifies their whole outlook and behavior and should color their every action. The first rather than the second of these views tends to dominate our thinking and consequently to determine and limit our practice. Because this double aspect of the church has been lost from view our conception of it has become clericalized in the thinking of both clergy and laity. This attitude often keeps us from seeing clearly our real problems. When we think of the relation of the church to the economic or social order we tend to think mainly or exclusively of what the church can do in its corporate capacity. We limit ourselves to the question, What influence can be brought to bear upon society from without? Such limitation is fatal. Really important changes can be brought about only from within. The conduct of public life, of government, and of industry involves a multitude of decisions from day to day by countless individuals, and there can be no deep change except by the progressive transformation of the insights and motives which prompt these decisions.

In consequence, Dr. Oldham concluded, the church must avoid two mistakes: it must not limit its conception of what it can and ought to do in the social and political spheres to what it can do appropriately and effectively *in its corporate capacity;* and it must not insist — however much truth there be in that belief — that it is not the business of the church as an organized society to interfere in politics or business,

and then remain content with this disclaimer of responsibility. It must recognize that the permeation of social life with Christian motives can be brought about only by the action of those who participate in the conduct of affairs. They can and should discharge this Christian responsibility as members of the church, nourished by its tradition, preaching and sacraments, instructed by its teaching and supported by its fellowship and prayers. In order to do this they need a kind of help which is not at present being given them, a kind of help which must arise from new thinking and the discovery of new types of ministry. To think new thoughts and discover new ministries is one of the distinct responsibilities of Oxford.

It was quite logical to move from such considerations to the question of what constitutes the basis of the Christian ethic or moral standard. This question was approached in two very different ways by Professor Emil Brunner of Switzerland and by Dr. Matthews, dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, London. Dr. Brunner, like M. Maury of France, maintained the view that the Christian ethic is not to be identified with the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount as interpreted by Tolstoy or in the social gospel. When so interpreted it becomes a legalistic thing, a system which exhausts its energies in making demands without mobilizing or creating the moral force to carry them out. Nothing is to be gained by demanding that I love my enemies. What is needed is the power to help me do it. This power is made available only through complete union with Christ, as Paul pictured it, and results in freedom from all laws, programs, schemes, or ethical principles.

Therefore, argued Dr. Brunner, it is not the business of the church to lay down any program or to establish any system. It is even to be doubted whether the church should speak of an ethic at all — since an ethic is conceived of as

having independent and enduring existence, as laying down rules for all of life. To the Christian the good is intelligible and possible only in connection with divine action. The knowledge of what God is and does connects itself indivisibly with obedience to his commands. One cannot exist apart from the other. Yet the church has cut this tie; it has set up dogmas which have no obvious relation to action and an ethical *scheme* which is separated from faith in God's saving *act* of redemption. Faith which is not at the same time obedience is not only incomplete but actually harmful, just as action which does not spring from faith is sinful.

Hence it appears, thinks Brunner, that a Christian ethic true to Christ is far more concerned with persons than with institutions, programs or systems. First of all the poisoned sources of conduct must be cleansed in order that conduct may be pure. The world needs primarily not new institutions but new men and women. This point of view is personalism. But it must not be confused with individualism. True faith indeed is the very opposite of individualism; it means being incorporated into the body of Christ, becoming one with him and with his will. Therefore the most personal kind of faith involves the most universal kind of service. Christ lived and lives to serve his Father and the world of men. So personal categories replace for the Christian all systems and legalistic principles. At the same time, however, Christian faith and personal regeneration do change institutions as nothing else can. Thus a new spirit in society and among nations can come into being. A major responsibility of the church is to bring into being this spirit and set on foot these changes through acceptance of God's free gift in Christ, the Saviour of both individuals and society.

To the Dean of St. Paul's the Sermon on the Mount and the summary of the law as given us by our Lord are the

very principles of the kingdom of God. The conception of the good, whether personal or social, remains an empty thing until it is filled with the moral values derived from the gospel. This conception is not simply the fruit of natural evolution; it is revealed to us in Christ and is the gift of God. The kingdom is therefore not of man but of God; it looks not for an earthly utopia but for ultimate consummation in the unseen world. To be sure, its principles cannot be applied directly to life in the actual world of human relationships while that world is organized on principles which are a direct contradiction of the kingdom ideal, but the Christian has the duty of adjusting his conduct so that it approximates as closely as possible to that ideal. He has also the advantage of a standard by which he may measure social as well as individual progress toward the good. Advance for the Christian signifies an approach toward a social order in which all persons would have opportunity of development in accordance with God's purpose. In that order all relations would be such as those described in the Sermon on the Mount.

The difference which here emerged between Dr. Brunner and Dr. Matthews is important to grasp because it was one of those basic differences which ran all through the conference and which are expressed in the Christianity of our time. The Continental view tends to be like that of Dr. Brunner, while the Anglo-Saxon and American view is much more like that of Dr. Matthews. The way of completely reconciling them has not yet been found, but that there are grounds of hope for mutual understanding will appear in the account of the subsequent actions of the Oxford Conference itself.

The last formal addresses of the conference — the major part of which was not addresses but group thinking which I shall describe in detail later on — were on the theme of

the ecumenical nature of the church and its responsibility toward the world. England, France, America, and Japan contributed the speakers. Mr. T. S. Eliot, the English poet, agreed with the others in declaring that the ecumenical nature of the church is today largely absent in fact. Our forms of worship, our theology, our organized life, have all been split up by two great forces among many. The first of these forces is nation-race-language, the second is class or social status — self-evident both. But the way to overcome the divergencies which they have caused is not clear. Many generations of Christians have done their thinking, and especially their theological thinking, very largely in the compartments of nation and class. The communions in not knowing one another have ceased truly to know or understand themselves. Their present interest in finding out more about one another is a very hopeful sign, for in learning more about others each will learn more about itself. Mr. Eliot expressed the belief that through this process we shall come to value at their true worth — that is, as incidental and not primary — such things as national and racial differences. We shall also see local and national ways of feeling and acting in their real character — right enough perhaps in themselves, but harmful if they are accepted as an integral part of Christian faith.

I have already referred to part of Pastor Pierre Maury's address. Dr. Maury maintained that the ecumenical nature of the church is determined solely by its relationship to Christ, and that we must insist on loyalty to Christ as the sole standard of reference and final court of appeal for all Christians. What loyalty to him may imply is not to be determined, however, apart from history. For in each moment of time there are sure to be particular ways in which the individual and the church should serve the will of the universal God.

The final American speaker, Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert, general secretary of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ, pointed out that because of the failure of the average Christian to realize that as a member of the church he is a member of a world community there is no true ecumenical consciousness today. The predominant loyalty of the average church member is to a local congregation or at most to a national denomination. Because he lacks vision of the church as a fellowship so vital as to transcend the ordinary barriers which separate men, it does not seem to him to stand for community in the widest sense at all. Therefore it does not seem strong or significant enough to command a wide allegiance. The average man does not see in the church the force that might unify civilization and save it from disintegration. It does not in fact unify or integrate, for example, even the divided and often hostile race and class groups in America; nor do American Christians usually feel that they have more in common with their fellow Christians in Japan or Germany or Russia than with their fellow Americans who do not share the Christian view of life.

The church can come to stand as an effective foe of war — as well as of lesser evils which threaten the world — only when it binds its members into such a solid whole as to make it unthinkable for them to take up arms against one another or to disregard the family ties which link them to a common heavenly Father. Dr. Cavert referred, as had the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dean Van Dusen and others, to the need of some organization which would link together the churches of the world as they have not been linked these many centuries and thus begin the slow process of regaining the lost sense of world fellowship.

A note of great poignancy and dramatic power was introduced with the presentation by the Reverend Chukichi

Yasuda of Kyoto of the problem of Christianity and nationalism in Japan. Although his comments were necessarily reserved it was sufficiently plain that to him as to so many others in the contemporary world the problem of church and state, of conflicting loyalties contending for man's supreme allegiance, was anything but theoretical. Although the cult of emperor worship is steadily gaining in Japan, Mr. Yasuda said, the government still officially asserts that the required shrine ceremony is not worship but only reverence before the symbols of national power incarnated in the person of the emperor. We all felt as we listened that what the future holds in store for the Christians of Japan no one can say. But their struggle is clearly going to be more and more serious, and many fear that martyrdom awaits those who fearlessly put Christ first and refuse to bow their necks to that reincarnation of Caesarism which a horror-struck world now witnesses in the Land of the Rising Sun.

III

OXFORD THINKS COLLECTIVELY —AND SPEAKS

At first, as every conference inevitably must, Oxford listened. The story of what it heard I have tried to tell very briefly. After listening for four days, it took five or six to think and discuss. That is the story of the second and creative stage of the conference.

What happened during these strenuous days of collective thinking is difficult to describe. The delegates broke up into five main sections to deal with the five main themes of the conference, and subdivided for special study during a number of days. Perhaps before mentioning the themes I should explain how each was subjected to the process of collective thinking by representatives of widely different points of view.

As I have already related, for more than three years before the Oxford Conference met a continuous interchange of thought was carried on under the direction of Dr. Oldham and his colleagues in the Universal Christian Council. More than a hundred significant contributions on the themes of the conference were secured from leading thinkers. These contributions were circulated in three languages among a much larger group of scholars for correction, revision and comment. At least four hundred persons, among them the ablest minds in the Christian church, took part in this preparatory study. Much of the fruit of this process was available to the leaders of the conference sections as well as to the delegates who desired to study it — and many did so desire.

When the sections met therefore they were not counting simply on the general information of their individual members, nor on the facts presented in the opening addresses. Moreover, a preliminary draft on the subject of each section had been prepared by the chairman and various persons chosen to represent different communions and viewpoints. These drafts had been given in advance to all delegates and provided an excellent starting point for discussion. That little of them appears in the final reports does not mean that they did not serve their purpose of focusing discussion at the outset. They were — to use Dr. Koo's simile — springboards and not weights.

These were the five themes:

I. Church and Community
II. Church and State
III. Church, Community and State in Relation to the Economic Order
IV. Church, Community and State in Relation to Education
V. The Universal Church and the World of Nations

The respective chairmen of these sections were Sir Walter Moberly of Great Britain, chairman of the Universities Grants Commission; Honorable Max Huber, Swiss jurist, formerly president of the Court of International Justice at The Hague; Principal John Maud of University College, Oxford, economist; President Henry Sloan Coffin of Union Theological Seminary, New York, educator and theologian; and President John A. Mackay of Princeton Theological Seminary, missionary, administrator, author and educator. Associated with them were secretaries for each commission or section, and these were chosen from different nations and different communions. In the case of Section V there was a subsection on war headed by Dr. Visser 't Hooft, originally of Holland, now of Geneva, secretary of the World Student Christian Federation.

The sections concerned with each of the main subjects met at the same period during four full morning sessions and four evening sessions. A smaller drafting committee, composed of from ten to fifteen persons representative of the churches throughout the world, was elected for each section. These committees worked almost every free hour during the last ten days of the conference. As Dr. Oldham points out, " the actual writing of the reports was the work of these committees, but what they wrote was the product of minds stimulated and fed by the discussion in the sections. The reports are not simply the work of a few individuals but the result of genuine group thinking. The plan of breaking up the conference into sections containing about eighty members and of appointing smaller drafting committees had the advantage of providing every member of the conference with the opportunity of contributing to its thought and at the same time of distributing the responsibility for its productive work among as many as fifty or sixty of its members." The plan worked; it was an amazing piece of ecumenical cooperation which could not " just happen " but which had to be planned and executed with the greatest care and foresight. That it met with almost unanimous approval is hardly surprising.

It might be thought that a great deal of time was consumed in making translations in each section, but this matter was handled very cleverly. Since the bulk of the delegates understood English there were only relatively small groups for whom translations in French and German were necessary. Each of these assembled around an expert translator in a sort of " huddle " and as the discussion proceeded the gist of it was given them so that they could participate. What they said in their own language was quickly translated into English for the benefit of those who did not understand French or German. It was gratifying to watch the working of this system. The delay occasioned by the

results of what happened at the old tower of Babel was really inconsequential.

After each section had completed the various stages of its work its findings were reported before a general session of the conference by the chairman of the section. Full discussion and comment followed, the first draft was rewritten where necessary, and the report was finally accepted by the conference in the form which represented the combined judgment of all.

A detailed story of all that went on in the sections and subsections would be very long indeed. No one person could write it, since the discussions proceeded simultaneously. What I shall try to do, however, is to give a brief picture of what went on in Section V, in which I was enrolled. We met in St. Columbo's Presbyterian Church just off High street. In my many years of conference experience all over the world I have never seen quite so impressive and representative a group of men struggle with a major problem of the church. As I looked around the first day, while Dr. Mackay was explaining the process which would govern our sessions, I noted in the group the following distinguished men: * Dr. John R. Mott; the Archbishop of York; Archbishop Germanos of the Eastern Orthodox Church; Dr. William P. Merrill, pastor of Brick Presbyterian Church, New York, and president of the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches; Dr. Otto Piper, formerly of Germany whence he was expelled by the nazis, now professor in Wales; Dr. T. Z. Koo of China; Dr. T. T. Lew, also of China, dean of the theological faculty of Yen Ching University; Dr. Adolf Keller of Geneva, author, pastor, professor, ecumenical leader par

* This is a very formidable list of names, but only by including it can I convey an impression of the diversity and caliber of that company.

excellence; Dr. A. L. Warnshuis, formerly of China and London, now New York secretary of the International Missionary Council; Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert of New York; Dr. Walter W. Van Kirk, director of the National Peace Conference in the United States; President George Richards of Lancaster Theological Seminary, moderator of the Reformed and Evangelical Church, U. S. A.; Dr. E. S. Tittle of the Methodist Church, Evanston, Illinois; Dr. Theodore A. Greene of New Britain, Connecticut, Congregational leader; Reverend Theodore C. Hume, pastor, Chicago, Illinois, and leader of peace activities of the Chicago Church Federation; Dr. W. H. Drummond, long a secretary of the World Alliance for International Peace and a resident of Oxford; Lord Robert Cecil of Chelwood, one of the founders of the League of Nations; Dr. Siegmund-Schultze, former court preacher to the German kaiser, editor and author, in exile for his convictions, and now residing in Switzerland; Miss Mary Dingman, head of the Women's International Peace Committee in Geneva; Dr. Edward L. Cross, pastor, president of the Congregational Home Board in the U. S. A.; Pastor Pierre Maury of France, prominent leader of the evangelical churches; Philip Carr, Lord Lothian, former secretary to the prime minister of Great Britain, author and expert on international affairs; Canon Raven of the Anglican Church in England; Richard Roberts, D. D., moderator of the United Church of Canada, pastor and author; Sir Alfred Zimmern of Oxford and Geneva, noted lecturer; Dr. Allen Knight Chalmers, pastor of Broadway Tabernacle Church, New York; Dr. Robert M. Hopkins, general secretary of the World Sunday School Association; Frau Söderblom, widow of the former primate of Sweden; Pastor Henry Louis Henriod of Geneva, general secretary of the Universal Christian Council; Honorable John Foster Dulles of New

York, lawyer; Dr. Joseph H. Oldham of London, research chairman of the Universal Christian Council and secretary of the International Missionary Council; Dr. Henry A. Atkinson, secretary of the Church Peace Union, New York; Reverend William Paton, London, secretary of the International Missionary Council; Dr. Visser 't Hooft; Mr. J. V. Wilson of the Secretariat of the League of Nations; and fifty others — men and women of distinction from all over the world! Even those I have just named represent a dozen nations and more than twenty denominations.

You might expect such a group to disagree; you might also consider anything upon which they could agree to be of quite unusual weight and significance. There were hours of discussion in that section which added greatly to the comprehension and insight of all who participated, no matter what their former experience. I well recall that soon after the conference I was speaking with Lord Lothian about his own impression. "It was," he said, "one of the most encouraging and surprising revelations of the fact that the churches realize their potential power in world affairs. There can be no question that the only way to peace is the way of Christ. But until Christians generally see what those Christians at Oxford saw, and act accordingly, there can be no fellowship across national lines which will stand the strain of modern conditions." What he felt was not very different from what certain distinguished lay representatives from America felt. "It was the most stimulating intellectual and spiritual experience of my life," said Mr. Charles Taft with regard to the discussions in the section of which he was a member.

To say these things to you who were not there is not, I realize, particularly convincing. You naturally wish to know something of the method followed and the results achieved. The results you can get in concrete and definite

form in the reports of the sections as they were finally presented to and accepted by the conference. The methods I shall try to describe in sufficient detail to give you a clear understanding of them.

We began in Section V with a review of the international situation facing the church. Dr. Koo and Dr. Lew from China gave it terrific and challenging force by reminding us that as we sat there talking war was breaking out in their homeland. " My wife is in Tokyo and my little twelve year old daughter is in Peking. I do not know whether I shall ever see them again," said Dr. Lew. He went on to explain that he could get no word from them, and that his feeling toward Japan was naturally conditioned by his fears on their behalf. Yet during those tense days the Japanese and Chinese delegates took afternoon tea together and discussed the problems which they both faced as Christians in a world of war. Right there in our own circle we were witnessing the power of Christianity to bring together those who were being driven apart by every force of nationalism and race difference.

Dr. Koo told of the meetings of Chinese and Japanese after the Shanghai battle of several years ago and said that he had come to hold a view of the relationship between the church universal and the world of nations which was the product of that experience and which had cost him dear. The creative part of our work at Oxford, he reminded us, must not be to analyze world conditions but to help us as Christians to determine what we ought to say and do. " You have to live a kind of life which will resolve the international situation for you in such a manner that the by-product of peace is yielded." To do this involved for him two things: living a life in which he specifically learned to love his enemy (" My Japanese enemy is sitting on my doorstep in China waiting for me to love him! " he said, with a

wistful hint of a smile on his expressive and noble face), and interweaving through all of life's relationships some higher loyalty which can embrace them all. Recognizing the fact that we might be mistaken he urged us to "take the risk of being wrong on the side of the unity of humanity."

We cannot live and work for a vacuum. The mere absence of war is a vacuum. The definite thing to work for is the kind of organization which will make the bonds of peace strong enough to overcome the causes of war. We live in a world of sin, but it is also a world in which Christ's great act of redemption has taken place. That is as much a fact as the world's sin. To be realists we must keep both facts in view. While conscious of sin we can likewise be conscious of the power given followers of Christ to incarnate his love and make it effective in all human relationships. Does this mean pacifism? Dr. Koo replied: "If the ultimate end of my loyalty is my family, I will fight. If my loyalty is to my nation as the final reality, I will fight. But for myself as a Christian I abjure the personal or national use of armed force. I can contemplate its use only by some truly international body which wields it as a police force under law. If the churches wish to be realistic about peace they will defend and strengthen the League of Nations, favor the honest application of sanctions, and help to create an international police force to see that they are not violated. Without some such process disarmament is an absolutely impossible dream in a world of sin and selfishness."

This general view was supported by Lord Cecil, Lord Lothian, Mr. Wilson, and a number of others who, as Christians, have been very close to the league in its development from the idealistic angle. Mr. J. V. Wilson, observer from the secretariat of the League of Nations, suggested that readers of the section's report would welcome

the fact that the Christian attitude toward the league had been directly and concretely examined. The report should enable the Christian to see the league in a just perspective as a machine which requires certain forces to set it in motion. " Like the community and the state," Mr. Wilson said, " the international order will be profoundly affected if in fact the powerful leaven of Christian impulse works in the ways you have chosen. May it be said," he concluded, " that the planes of ecumenical Christianity and ecumenical politics, most distinct though they are, meet in the summons to 'keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.' "

When many in the group protested that the league had failed to accomplish those purposes which had won it such wide church support these men replied that the nations which compose the league had certainly failed, but that we have yet to see what a league composed of nations really committed to the cause of peace could accomplish. Such a league, they felt, should be part of the program of enlightened Christians, and while the church as an institution is not called upon to promote it its members ought to do so in their private capacity as citizens.

Sir Alfred Zimmern pointed out that mechanization has enabled the gospel, often seemingly driven by the devil, to travel around the world. If we are to wait until the whole world is Christian and everyone in it dominated by Christlike impulses we shall wait forever. The league is plainly a secular good, not a spiritual one. But it is the best which man can devise in an unchristianized world. The specific task of the church in relation to the international order is, as he sees it, that of making economic interdependence — which is a fact — human interdependence — which is not yet a fact — in the consciousness of mankind. Wherever there is an export of capital there a Chris-

tian duty is created. We cannot, in other words, forget that economic forces are back of war and that they can be controlled. If we were too optimistic about their control ten years ago it seems evident that we are too pessimistic now. The church cannot afford to take a defeatist attitude, nor should it allow the Christian as a citizen to take it.

Honorable John Foster Dulles of New York followed up this statement with another in which he said that if the so-called Christian nations had given to Germany under Chancellor Bruening one-tenth of what Germany has taken under Chancellor Hitler we should not have ruthless dictatorship in Germany. We ought to work as Christians to remove the idea that it is ever too late to talk about justice and to try to do justice. There is too much concern in the contemporary world for law and order and not enough for right and justice. The church too often allies itself with the former and neglects the latter. It says in effect to the rich young ruler, "Give me part of what you have and I will help you to keep the rest through the support of law and order — contractual relations!" We should, Mr. Dulles declared, lean over backwards in standing for right and justice rather than stand simply for an old established order based on laws which often enshrine injustice. We must see that moral conditions are created under which we can say that force has lost its sanction; and the right of resort to force loses moral sanction only when there has been established some machinery for securing justice. Only in this way can we look forward to ridding the world of war.

Canon Raven took a strong stand in opposition to what had been said by all those who thought force could ever be contemplated without complete condemnation. The church, he felt, had been distorted by the end of the third

century. The church which dares to be Christian today will doubtless be a martyr church, but it will be called upon to choose the way of martyrdom in loyalty to its Lord.

Lord Lothian interjected that he regarded the mind of Christ as the most penetrating and devastating of all reforming forces, yet not as being political in any sense. Christ's mind is our only rock; on it alone can true reform of the international situation be founded. His mind has been responsible through his church for most of the things we treasure. Christianity when it is true to him is dynamic and productive. Yet, even so, it is hardly to be expected that Christians will be able to speak with one voice regarding any specific reform. Christ reveals himself to individuals in many different ways. We have therefore to distinguish between the church as the means of transmitting the Christian message and the church as an originator of the means for applying that message. Clearly God has, through the church, thrown down a challenge to war. When we achieve an ecumenical church in the place of the divided church we now have, we shall not differ so much as to how God's will for the nations is to be interpreted. National sovereignty is itself a denial of the Christian ideal. The state which insists on being sovereign cannot put right and justice first; security is its only norm. Christianity must challenge the idea of national sovereignty but not expect it to yield instantly. However, until we realize that the federal principle is basic, and until we limit national sovereignty, we cannot expect to have a world of nations living at peace.

There was much more to the discussion — a very great deal more. But what I have here set down gives a fair idea of its trends. Out of it came the appointment of a drafting committee consisting of the two chairmen — President

Mackay and Dr. 't Hooft — Secretary Paton, Professor Zimmern, Mr. Dulles, Professor Alexis, the Archbishop of York, Pastor Maury, Dr. T. Z. Koo and Dr. Walter W. Van Kirk. Three Americans, three Englishmen, one Dutchman, one Frenchman, one Russian and one Chinese; the Church of England, the Reformed Church of Holland, the Protestant Episcopal Church, the French Reformed Church, the United Church of China, and the Methodist Church — a pretty representative cross section of nationalities and creeds whichever way you look at it. This committee drew up a report and brought what it had written before all the section members for criticism and revision before the final draft was made.

On Monday, July 19, Dr. Mackay presented the report to the full conference and received numerous suggestions and criticisms. In the light of these the report was again revised and given the form in which it has now been laid before the churches of the world. It should be read by every intelligent Christian who cares about world peace, and it will form the basis of much study and action in the years to come. Since it is, even in its brief form, twenty pages long, I shall include an outline of it along with brief summaries of the other sectional reports.

The same general process was followed in each of the other sections. One got the impression that, in each, strong spiritual as well as intellectual tides were flowing. At first everything seemed chaotic — differences were so acute and viewpoints so varied. Always there was the language difficulty, of which I have spoken; but deeper down were the differences in psychological and cultural viewpoints. I well remember that in one case an intimate colleague of mine was asked to draft an important statement for one of the sections. He did so, using what I suppose we would

call "American English." When his Continental and British friends told him what his statement meant to them he was dismayed to find that they were reading into it ideas which had not even remotely entered his mind when he prepared it. Such difficulties of course were bound to appear. The contrast between the Western and the Eastern Christian showed itself repeatedly and could never be wholly overcome. That any progress from chaos toward creative agreement was possible seemed at times a miracle. Yet that miracle took place. None who witnessed it could escape the conviction that God's hand was in it, his power behind it, his will expressed through it.

Thus did creative collective thought bring the conference to the point where it was ready to speak with conviction, unanimity, and convincing moral authority derived not from ecclesiastical organization but from the spirit of the Living God.

We shall now inquire into what it spoke.

Since the most careful and authentic summary of the findings of the Oxford Conference on Church, State and Society — or Church, Community and State, if we use the British title — is given in the message it issued to the Christian churches it represented, I shall begin with that message. The official text follows:

The delegates to the World Conference on Church, Community and State, assembled at Oxford from July 12 to 26, 1937, send at the close of their deliberations the following message to the Churches of Christ throughout the world: —

In the name of Christ, greetings.

We meet at a time when mankind is oppressed with perplexity and fear. Men are burdened with evils almost insupportable and with problems apparently insoluble.

Even in countries which are at peace unemployment and malnutrition sap men's strength of body, mind and spirit. In other countries war does its "devil's work," and threatens to overwhelm us all in its limitless catastrophe.

Yet we do not take up our task as bewildered citizens of our several nations, asking if anywhere there is a clue to our problems; we take it up as Christians, to whom is committed "the word of reconciliation," that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."

The first duty of the church, and its greatest service to the world, is that it be in very deed the church — confessing the true faith, committed to the fulfillment of the will of Christ, its only Lord, and united in him in a fellowship of love and service.

We do not call the world to be like ourselves, for we are already too like the world. Only as we ourselves repent, both as individuals and as corporate bodies, can the church call men to repentance. The call to ourselves and to the world is to Christ.

Despite our unfaithfulness God has done great things through his church. One of the greatest is this, that, notwithstanding the tragedy of our divisions and our inability in many important matters to speak with a united voice, there exists an actual world-fellowship. Our unity in Christ is not a theme for aspiration; it is an experienced fact. We can speak of it with boldness because our conference is an illustration of it. We are drawn from many nations and from many different communions, from churches with centuries of history behind them and from the younger churches whose story covers but a few decades; but we are one in Christ.

The unity of this fellowship is not built up from its constituent parts, like a federation of different states. It consists in the sovereignty and redeeming acts of its one Lord.

The source of unity is not the consenting movement of men's wills; it is Jesus Christ whose one life flows through the body and subdues the many wills to his.

The Christian sees distinctions of race as part of God's purpose to enrich mankind with a diversity of gifts. Against racial pride or race antagonism the church must set its face implacably as rebellion against God. Especially in its own life and worship there can be no place for barriers because of race or color. Similarly the Christian accepts national communities as part of God's purpose to enrich and diversify human life. Every man is called of God to serve his fellows in the community to which he belongs. But national egotism tending to the suppression of other nationalities or of minorities is, no less than individual egotism, a sin against the Creator of all peoples and races. The deification of nation, race or class, or of political or cultural ideals, is idolatry, and can lead only to increasing division and disaster.

On every side we see men seeking for a life of fellowship in which they experience their dependence on one another. But because community is sought on a wrong basis, the intensity of the search for it issues in conflict and disintegration. In such a world the church is called to be in its own life that fellowship which binds men together in their common dependence on God and overleaps all barriers of social status, race or nationality.

In consonance with its nature as true community, the church will call the nations to order their lives as members of the one family of God. The universal church, surveying the nations of the world, in every one of which it is now planted and rooted, must pronounce a condemnation of war unqualified and unrestricted. War can occur only as a fruit and manifestation of sin. This truth is unaffected by any question of what may be the duty of a nation which

has to choose between entry upon war and a course which it believes to be a betrayal of right, or what may be the duty of a Christian citizen whose country is involved in war. The condemnation of war stands, and also the obligation to seek the way of freeing mankind from its physical, moral and spiritual ravages. If war breaks out, then preeminently the church must manifestly be the church, still united as the one body of Christ, though the nations wherein it is planted fight one another, consciously offering the same prayers that God's name may be hallowed, his kingdom come, and his will be done in both, or all, the warring nations. This fellowship of prayer must at all costs remain unbroken. The church must also hold together in one spiritual fellowship those of its members who take different views concerning their duty as Christian citizens in time of war.

To condemn war is not enough. Many situations conceal the fact of conflict under the guise of outward peace. Christians must do all in their power to promote among the nations justice and peaceful cooperation, and the means of peaceful adjustment to altering conditions. Especially should Christians in more fortunate countries press the demand for justice on behalf of the less fortunate. The insistence upon justice must express itself in a demand for such mitigation of the sovereignty of national states as is involved in the abandonment by each of the claim to be judge in its own cause.

We recognize the state as being in its own sphere the highest authority. It has the God-given aim in that sphere to uphold law and order and to minister to the life of its people. But as all authority is from God, the state stands under his judgment. God is himself the source of justice, of which the state is not lord but servant. The Christian can acknowledge no ultimate authority but God; his loyalty

to the state is part of his loyalty to God and must never usurp the place of that primary and only absolute loyalty.

The church has duties laid upon it by God which at all cost it must perform, among which the chief is to proclaim the word of God and to make disciples, and to order its own life in the power of the Spirit dwelling in it. Because this is its duty it must do it, whether or not the state consents; and the state on its side should recognize the duty and assure full liberty for its performance. The church can claim such liberty for itself only as it is also concerned for the rights and liberties of others.

In the economic sphere the first duty of the church is to insist that economic activities, like every other department of human life, stand under the judgment of Christ. The existence of economic classes presents a barrier to human fellowship which cannot be tolerated by the Christian conscience. Indefensible inequalities of opportunity in regard to education, leisure and health continue to prevail. The ordering of economic life has tended to enhance acquisitiveness and to set up a false standard of economic and social success. The only forms of employment open to many men and women, or the fact that none is open, prevent them from finding a sense of Christian vocation in their daily life.

We are witnessing new movements which have arisen in reaction to these evils but which combine with their struggle for social justice the repudiation of all religious faith. Aware of the reality of sin, the church knows that no change in the outward ordering of life can of itself eradicate social evil. The church therefore cannot surrender to the utopian expectations of these movements, and their godlessness it must unequivocally reject; but in doing so it must recognize that Christians in their blindness to the challenging

evils of the economic order have been partly responsible for the antireligious character of these movements.

Christians have a double duty — both to bear witness to their faith within the existing economic order and also to test all economic institutions in the light of their understanding of God's will. The forces of evil against which Christians have to contend are found not only in the hearts of men as individuals, but have entered into and infected the structure of society, and there also must be combated. The responsibility of the church is to insist on the true relationship of spiritual and economic goods. Man cannot live without bread, and man cannot live by bread alone. Our human wealth consists in fellowship with God and in him with our brethren. To this fellowship the whole economic order must be made subservient.

The questions which have mainly engaged the attention of the conference are questions that can be effectively dealt with, in practice, only by the laity. Those who are responsible for the daily conduct of industry, administration and public life must discover for themselves what is the right decision in an endless variety of concrete situations. If they are to receive the help they need in making responsible Christian decisions new types of ministry will have to be developed by the church.

The fulfillment of the tasks to which the church is called today lies largely in the hands of youth. Many loud voices are calling on young people to give themselves to political and social ideals, and it is often hard for them to hear the voice of Jesus Christ who calls them to be servants of the eternal kingdom. Yet many of the younger generation, often in spite of ridicule and sometimes of persecution, are turning to him, and individually as well as in Christian youth movements devote themselves to the renewal of the life of the churches and to making known the good news

of Christ by word and action. We rejoice in their brave witness.

In the education of youth the church has a twofold task. First, it must be eager to secure for every citizen the fullest possible opportunity for the development of the gifts that God has bestowed on him. In particular, the church must condemn inequality of educational opportunity as a main obstacle to fullness of fellowship in the life of the community.

While the church is thus concerned with all education it has, also, a special responsibility to realize its own understanding of the meaning and end of education in the relation of life to God. In education, as elsewhere, if God is not recognized he is ignored. The church must claim the liberty to give a Christian education to its own children. It is in the field of education that the conflict between Christian faith and non-Christian conceptions of the ends of life, between the church and an all-embracing community life which claims to be the source and goal of every human activity, is in many parts of the world most acute. In this conflict all is at stake, and the church must gird itself for the struggle.

As we look to the future it is our hope and prayer that the Spirit of God may cause new life to break forth spontaneously in a multitude of different centers, and that there may come into being a large number of "cells" of Christian men and women associated in small groups for the discovery of fresh ways in which they may serve God and their fellow men.

We have deeply felt the absence from our fellowship of the churches that have not been represented at the conference. Our hearts are filled with anguish as we remember the suffering of the church in Russia. Our sympathy and gratitude go out to our Christian brethren in Ger-

many; we are moved to a more living trust by their steadfast witness to Christ and we pray that we may be given grace to bear the same clear witness to the Lord.

We have much to encourage us since the conference at Stockholm twelve years ago. The sense of the unity of the church in all the world grows stronger every year. We trust that this cause will be yet more fully served by the world council of churches, proposals for which have been considered by the conference and commended to the churches.

We have tried during these days at Oxford to look without illusion at the chaos and disintegration of the world, the injustices of the social order and the menace and horror of war. The world is anxious and bewildered and full of pain and fear. We are troubled, yet we do not despair. Our hope is anchored in the living God. In Christ, and in the union of man with God and of man with man, which he creates, life even in face of all these evils has a meaning. In his name we set our hands as the servants of God, and in him of one another, to the task of proclaiming God's message of redemption, of living as his children and of combating injustice, cruelty and hate. The church can be of good cheer; it hears its Lord saying, " I have overcome the world."

In addition to this general message the conference, in view of the absence of any representatives of that great body of Christians, addressed a special message to the German Evangelical Church. In presenting the proposal of his special committee for a message and a draft text thereof the Bishop of Chichester, Dr. Bell, referred with feeling to the many difficulties through which Germany has passed during the last nineteen years. We cannot, he said, forget the mistakes — and more than mistakes — of which the victo-

rious powers were guilty. "How deeply one regrets that the opportunities then existing for a kindlier, a humaner, settlement of European affairs were not met in a generous imaginative way by all the powers with whom the responsibility lay." He called attention to the efforts made in Germany itself for the reshaping of her life and indicated that all Christians outside Germany should do everything possible to encourage that country's return to the full enjoyment of the spiritual and material life of the world of nations. Because we as members of other churches are bound to stand side by side with our brethren of the German Evangelical Church, who uphold the principles for which the Oxford Conference stands, we should, he proposed, join in sending them, through a personal delegation rather than merely in writing, the following message:

THE BRETHREN IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES ASSEMBLED AT OXFORD TO THEIR BRETHREN IN THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN GERMANY:

The representatives of Christian churches, assembled at Oxford from all parts of the world, mourn the absence of their brethren in the German Evangelical Church, with whom they have been closely bound both in the preparations for this conference and in the great tasks which are set before the universal church.

We welcome the fact that an agreement had been reached that a common delegation of the German Evangelical Church should be sent to Oxford; we therefore miss the more the great help which its members would have given in the treatment of the fundamental questions of our time. But though your delegates are absent, the very circumstances of their absence have created a stronger sense of fellowship than before.

We are greatly moved by the afflictions of many pastors and laymen who have stood firm from the first in the Confessional church for the sovereignty of Christ, and for the freedom of the church of Christ to preach his gospel.

We note the gravity of the struggle in which not your church alone, but the Roman Catholic Church as well, is engaged, against distortion and suppression of Christian witness, and for the training of the young in a living faith in Jesus Christ as Son of God and King of kings and Lord of lords.

We remember the words of the Scriptures: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." "If one member suffer all the members suffer with it, or one member is honored all the members rejoice with it." So we, your brethren in other churches, are one with our suffering brethren in the German Evangelical Church in love and prayer. Your Lord is our Lord, your faith our faith, your baptism our baptism. We are moved to a more living trust ourselves by your steadfast witness to Christ, and we pray that we may be given grace in all our churches to bear the same clear witness to the Lord.

We pray God to bless you, and to guide and comfort you in your afflictions; and we call upon the churches throughout the world to make intercession for you with our Father in Heaven, and to rejoice that once again it has been proved that a faith born of sacrifice is counted worthy of sacrifice.

The conference, visibly moved, adopted this message by a standing vote, and also the bishop's proposal that a delegation go to the Evangelical Church in Germany to deliver the message and to inform the church about the proceedings of the conference as a whole.

This message, be it recalled, was issued at a time when already more than a hundred pastors of the German Evangelical Church were under arrest, including several who were scheduled to address the conference, and many more were forbidden to preach or to speak in public. It was the one thing concerning Oxford which the controlled press of deluded Germany reported to the German people. But to say even this is to exaggerate: so far as we could discover the message itself was kept from the Germans by their own press. A protest against the message was made at Oxford by three Germans not members of the German Evangelical

Church but of small minority churches, insignificant in size compared to the great Protestant body of Lutherans and Reformed Evangelicals. Because of their clever strategy these small free churches have remained practically unmolested up to the present time by the National Socialist government. Their protest was what the Reich press blazoned from one end of the country to the other. No better proof of the actual state of affairs in that land in this tragic time could have been offered the world.

Subsequent events and the sending of the delegation which the conference had authorized brought unmistakable evidence that the Confessional churchmen — the strong Evangelical opposition to the so-called "practical Christianity" of Hitler — deeply appreciated both the action and the message. That they were not permitted to take part in the conference to which they had looked forward and in preparation for which their ablest leaders had worked through tireless months was to them but one further proof, if any were needed, that the forces of Antichrist were bent on the isolation of the German church and the corruption or destruction of Christianity in the land of Martin Luther. Nothing could have emphasized more strikingly the timeliness of Oxford's endeavor to open the eyes of Christians the world over to the danger in which the church stands when a state seeks virtually to become itself a church by demanding not only political obedience but blind loyalty of heart and mind and conscience from every man, woman and child within its borders.

Besides these messages, as I have indicated, the conference issued the five main reports of the sections, which embody the fruits of the collective thinking done during strenuous days and nights of conscientious work. To these we now turn. One general thread may be discerned in them all — the one I have suggested in the title of this

book, although it was not so phrased at Oxford: the imperative need of a world in chaos for a new expression of world Christianity. Not in a spirit of superiority did these representative Christians speak; rather was it with humility and penitence. They recognized that the church as an institution had failed sadly to show forth the spirit of her Master in her organization, her work and her witness. Each of the great problems presented was studied from the point of view of its relationship not merely to the findings of human reason but also and primarily of its relationship to Christ's revelation of the nature of God and man's place in the purpose of God. In other words, the practical considerations were but introductory to a reconsideration of the theological side so often neglected by the church in recent years, with the result of superficiality and loss of conviction before the tests of demonic evil in men and in nations.

I. CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

The report of this section was warmly welcomed by practically the whole conference, which expressed general approval of it after several hours of discussion in plenary session. Nineteen persons took part in this discussion. The variety of their backgrounds gives striking testimony to the desire of the chairman of the business committee, Dr. John R. Mott, and of his associates to make certain that as many points of view as possible be represented. The nineteen speakers on this report, for example, included seven Continentals, of whom two were from the Orthodox Church; five Americans, of whom two were Negroes; three Asiatics; three Britons; and one South African of European blood.

The summary of the work of the section given by its chairman, Sir Walter Moberly, was followed with almost painful intensity; for one of the major problems of the

Christian church is how it is to fulfill its task in the midst of a divided, disunited world wherein the very foundations of communal or social life are shaken. The report indicates that the root cause of the disintegration of society is that human life has tried to organize itself on a humanistic basis without reference to God's purpose and power. The essential message of the church is that in God is the key to true community and that in Jesus Christ is revealed the character of God. Before the church can recall the world to God it must remember in contrition that its own life, which should make him manifest, is deeply infected with the diseases of the common life. The Christian church is not set in a vacuum; it must obey God's call in the concrete realities of daily life. From this fact springs unceasing tension for both the church and the individual Christian; the church must hold fast to its one supreme calling to bear costly witness in deed and word to the higher way of Christianity.

The report calls special attention to three urgent problems on which the church must bear witness: First, the problem involved in the elevation of the nation to divine status; second, the problem involved in racial discrimination; third, the problem involved in the establishing of closer relationships between the church and the common life in deed as well as in word. In view of the immediate urgency of these problems a supplementary declaration was drawn up, as follows:

(1) "God wills all men to be saved." Therefore he has in Christ come to us, and therefore he has established his church among us to proclaim the message of salvation through Christ for all nations. The church has the only all-decisive source for its message about God and his will in the revelation of God in Christ.

(2) As Christians we consider our membership in a distinct community (*Volk*) as a divine gift. The love of a Christian

for his people is also his gratitude toward God for the gift thereby given to him.

(3) In order to fulfill its task the church takes its place in the community (*Volk*) wherein human life is lived. This does not mean the subordination of the church to the national life, but the effective fulfillment of its task to reach all members of the community with the gospel pure and undefiled.

(4) Every kind of national egotism, where the love of one's own nation leads to the suppression of other nationalities (minorities), is sin and rebellion against God, the Lord of all nations.

(5) The deification of one's own people is sin against God. "Thou shalt have none other God but me." To see in one's own people (in one's own blood) the saving revelation of God is anti-Christian. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved."

The nature of the full report may best be understood from the practical suggestions which form a part of it and which I quote in full:

There is a call from God today

(1) To every local congregation, to realize at any cost in its own self that unity, transcending all differences and barriers of class, social status, race and nation, which we believe the Holy Spirit can and will create in those who are ready to be led by him.

(2) To different churches in any district, to come together for a local ecumenical witness in worship and work.

(3) To all Christians, to a more passionate and costly concern for the outcast, the underprivileged, the persecuted and the despised in the community and beyond the community. The recrudescence of pitiless cruelty, hatreds and race discriminations (including anti-Semitism) in the modern world is one of the major signs of its social disintegration. To these must be brought not the weak rebuke of words but the powerful rebuke of deeds. Thus the unity of the church is advanced. The church has been called into existence by God not for itself but for the world. Only by going out of itself in the work of Christ can it find unity in itself.

(4) More specifically to the church, to extend its concern to the particular areas of life where existing conditions continuously undo its work and thwart the will of God for his children — conditions such as misunderstanding between old and young, tension between men and women, health, housing, employment, recreation, in both their distinctive rural and urban forms. Thus the church seeks to express God's concern for every man in his own neighborhood and vocation.

(5) To the church, to undertake new social experiments, especially in local communities, through which the general level of conscience may be raised.

(6) To the church, to play a healing and reconciling part in the conflicts, misunderstandings or hatreds which arise between interests or classes within the local community or the nation.

(7) To the church, to encourage authoritative study of mooted problems in such areas as race and industry and to draw together Christians of different races and groups for united study, fellowship and action.

(8) To Christian men and women in the same vocation or industry, to meet together for prayerful discussion as to how in their particular sphere of the common life the problems which arise can be dealt with as God would require.

(9) To members of the Christian church, to be ready to undertake responsibilities in local and national government. The church should seek to guide and support these its representatives in their efforts to solve the problems by which they are faced in the light of Christian principles.

(10) To all Christians, to seek by simplicity and discipline in personal living to go beyond the accepted standards of the community in the love revealed in Christ.

Finally, there is laid upon the Christian church in all lands the obligation to create and to foster among all its branches and among all its members solidarity and cooperation, which are stronger than all the divisions which now disrupt the family of mankind. The ecumenical movement which has found expression in the conference at Oxford should become an integral part in the life of every church, every local congregation and every individual Christian. To help to create it, to support it, to develop it, is a solemn responsibility to God who so loved the *world* that he gave his only begotten Son for its sin. Thus shall

be plainly manifested to mankind in its chaos and division something of that peace and order of brotherly love which come only from God and from Jesus Christ his Son, our Lord.

II. CHURCH AND STATE

The report on this subject suggests that its purpose was not to set forth an abstract doctrine of the relation of church and state, but to express the Christian's attitude toward the secularization of modern society and the growing power of the state and to distinguish from their applications in differing historical situations those principles and duties which determine the Christian attitude toward the state in all circumstances.

Under the first heading, "Principles," it is recognized that for the Christian there "can be no ultimate authority but very God." The state is at the same time an order within which Christians have to live and witness for Christ, and an institution toward which the church both as a corporate body and as a fellowship of witnessing Christians may be called to take differing positions, either of cooperation, criticism, or opposition, in differing historical situations. In any discussion of the relation of state and church, therefore, the historical situation must always be considered.

Two facts characteristic of the present time which lay upon the church the duty of redefining its practical attitude are the growing dechristianization of the populations of some countries and the widespread tendency of the state to assume control of the whole of human life in all its individual and social aspects, and to attribute absolute value to itself, to the national community, to the dominating class, or to the prevailing cultural form.

The report includes a fourfold statement of principles, as follows:

THE DISTINCTIVE FUNCTIONS OF CHURCH AND OF STATE

The church as the trustee of God's redeeming gospel and the state as the guarantor of order, justice, and civil liberty have distinct functions in regard to society. The church's concern is to witness to men of the realities which outlast change because they are founded on the eternal will of God. The concern of the state is to provide men with justice, order and security in a world of sin and change. As it is the aim of the church to create a community founded on divine love, it cannot do its work by coercion, nor must it compromise the standards embodied in God's commandments by surrender to the necessities of the day. The state, on the other hand, has the duty of maintaining public order, and therefore must use coercion and accept the limits of the practicable.

The distinctive character of the church's activity is the free operation of grace and love. The distinctive character of the state's activity, whatever its constructive function in cultural and social life may be, is the power of constraint, legal and physical. In consequence there are certain social activities which clearly belong to the church and others which clearly belong to the state; there are, however, still others which may be performed by either church or state. In this area tension is unavoidable and solutions will vary in varying historical circumstances. It is true that our Lord told his disciples to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's. But it is God who declares what is Caesar's. Therefore, whatever the choice may be, the Christian must always, whether as a member of the church or as a citizen, obey the will of God.

DUTIES OF THE CHURCH TO THE STATE

The primary duty of the church to the state is to be the church, namely, to witness for God, to preach his word, to confess the faith before men, to teach both young and old to observe the divine commandments, and to serve the nation and the state by proclaiming the will of God as the supreme standard to which all human wills must be subject and all human conduct must conform. These functions of worship, preaching, teaching and ministry the church cannot renounce whether the state consent or not.

From this responsibility certain duties follow for the churches and for their members.

(a) *Duties with Reference to the Individual State.* These duties are (*a*) that of praying for the state, its people and its governments; (*b*) that of loyalty and obedience to the state, disobedience becoming a duty only if obedience would be clearly contrary to the command of God; (*c*) that of cooperation with the state in promoting the welfare of the citizens and of lending moral support to the state when it upholds the standards of justice set forth in the Word of God; (*d*) that of criticism of the state when it departs from those standards; (*e*) that of holding before men in all their legislation and administration those principles which make for the upholding of the dignity of man who is made in the image of God; (*f*) that of permeating the public life with the spirit of Christ and of training up men and women who as Christians can contribute to this end.

These duties rest upon Christians not only as individuals redeemed by Christ who must witness for him in whatever position they may occupy in the state, but also upon the church as a Christian community. The church can serve the state in no better way than by illustrating in its own life the kind of life which is God's will for society as a whole. Only in the measure that it seeks to realize this mission is it in a position to rebuke the state for its sins and failures for which both individual Christians and the church in its organized capacity have been in no small measure responsible.

(b) *Duties with Reference to the State in Its Relations to Other States.* In the interpretation of these duties it is important to keep constantly in mind that as the church in its own sphere is a universal society, so to Christian faith the individual state is not itself the ultimate political unit, but a member of a family of nations with international relations and duties which it is the responsibility not only of the individual Christians but also of the churches to affirm and to promote.

THE FREEDOM OF THE CHURCH

In a state which is Christian by profession it is self-evident that the church should be free to the fullest extent to fulfill its function. It should also be evident that where in such a state there are majority and minority churches the same essential

liberty to carry out the church's function should be enjoyed by minorities as well as by the majority. All churches should renounce the use of the coercive power of the state in matters of religion. Membership in a minority church should not be a reason for denying full civil and political equality.

In a state which acknowledges a liberal doctrine of rights it is equally evident that the church like other associations should have the liberty which its function requires. In countries where the church finds in the theory and constitution of the state nothing on which to base a claim to right, this does not absolve the church from its primary duty of witness. This duty must then include a witness against such a denial of fundamental justice. And if the state tries to hinder or suppress such witness, all other churches have the duty of supporting this church and giving it the utmost succor and relief in their power.

We recognize as essential conditions necessary to the church's fulfillment of its primary duty that it should enjoy: (*a*) freedom to determine its faith and creed; (*b*) freedom of public and private worship, preaching and teaching; (*c*) freedom from any imposition by the state of religious ceremonies and forms of worship; (*d*) freedom to determine the nature of its government and the qualifications of its ministers and members and, conversely, the freedom of the individual to join the church to which he feels called; (*e*) freedom to control the education of its ministers, to give religious instruction to its youth and to provide for adequate development of their religious life; (*f*) freedom of Christian service and missionary activity, both home and foreign; (*g*) freedom to cooperate with other churches; (*h*) freedom to use such facilities, open to all citizens or associations, as will make possible the accomplishment of these ends: the ownership of property and the collection of funds.

The freedom essential for the church can in fact exist both in churches organized as free associations under the general laws of a country and in churches established in an organic or other special connection with the state. If, however, this connection should result in impairing the church's freedom to carry out its distinctive mission, it would then become the duty of its ministers and members to do all in their power to secure this freedom, even at the cost of disestablishment.

THE PRESENT TASKS OF THE CHURCH

What then follows from this survey as to the present tasks and opportunities of the churches? This at least, that it is their duty:

(1) To summon their own members to repentance, both as individuals and as organized bodies, for their sins of omission and of commission and to pray for the spirit of consecration which shall make of them, both in their separate and in their united activities, agents which God may use for his purpose in the world.

(2) To create within the local community, the nation, and the world such agencies of cooperative action as shall make it possible for them to discharge effectively such tasks as can be done in common.

(3) To summon their individual members in their several callings — not only clerical but also lay members, men and women — to cooperate with the state in such constructive tasks as may be for the good of the whole.

(4) To guard for all churches, both as groups of witnessing Christians and in their organized capacity, the opportunity of worship, of witness, of service, and of education which is essential to their mission, and this not for their own sake only, but for the sake of the states.

(5) To follow with sympathetic interest the fortunes of those, Christians and non-Christians, who are victims of cruelty and oppression, and to do what they can to secure for them a treatment compatible with the dignity of their human personality as children of God.

(6) To renounce publicly and forever the use of all forms of persecution, whether by Christians against other Christians or by Christians against adherents of other religions.

III. THE CHURCH AND THE ECONOMIC ORDER

The four hour debate which prepared the way for the acceptance by the whole conference of the work done by its section on economics demonstrated to the surprise of all that there was little disagreement with the principles set forth and none of a really serious nature. It was uni-

versally recognized that there had gone into the making of the report not only the scholarship of renowned leaders of the church but likewise the long experience of men of large public and business affairs, such as Vice-Chancellor John Maud of University College, Oxford; Sir Josiah Stamp, railway president and banker; T. S. Eliot, poet; R. H. Tawney, economist, and John MacMurray, philosopher — all of Great Britain; Honorable Francis B. Sayre, assistant secretary of state; Honorable Charles P. Taft; Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr and Mr. James M. Speers, of the United States; and men of like standing in other lands.

What this degree of unanimity meant in the final stages of the report the reader can better appreciate when I point out that on one of the early days of the discussion a prominent American financier, a member of the section, was overheard to say to one of his business friends: "No, I can't stand any more of that discussion. You go and vote 'No' on everything! That will represent both of us." He later was among those who defended the section's findings.

Mr. Sayre, in advocating the report's affirmation that "it is largely the economic cleavages that are splitting the nations apart," said: "We, in the American government, are convinced that lasting peace can never come until the people constructively build for it. There must be changed economic policies. That is why we are bending every energy to tear down the indefensible trade barriers which force down in every nation the national standards of living." Mr. James M. Speers found that the report "could be easily understood by businessmen." He did add, however, that "there was too much pessimism in the report." Others, including the Dutch minister of labor and Mrs. Harper Sibley, wife of the former president of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, gave their strong support to the section. The participation of these people

shows clearly that not only theorists and theologians were speaking to the church.

The section issued the following summary statements:

THE RELEVANCE OF THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL TO THE ECONOMIC ORDER

The Christian church approaches the problems of the social and economic order from the standpoint of her faith in the revelation of God in Christ. Through his redemptive work Christ made the whole range of human life subject to that law of love which he perfectly embodied in his own life and death. The charter of Christian practice is therefore given to us in that second commandment which Christ said is like unto the first and without obedience to which the first could not be obeyed – namely, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Obedience to this commandment of love in the economic sphere means the pursuit of justice. Christians must therefore do everything in their power to create a more just ordering of economic life by attempting to secure for all who are their neighbors such opportunities as are necessary for their full development as persons in body, mind and spirit. The responsibility of the church is to insist on the true relationship of spiritual and economic goods. Our human wealth consists in fellowship with God and in him with our brethren. To this fellowship the whole economic order must be made subservient.

THE CHIEF POINTS IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE AT WHICH THE PURPOSE OF GOD IS CHALLENGED

The subordination of God's purpose for human life to the demands of the economic process seems in practice to be a tendency common to all existing kinds of economic organization. In particular we draw attention to certain features of modern life in the so-called capitalist countries of the world.

(1) The ordering of economic life has tended to enhance acquisitiveness and to set up a false standard of economic and social success.

(2) Indefensible inequalities of opportunity in regard to education, leisure and health continue to prevail; and the ex-

istence of economic classes presents an obstacle to human fellowship which cannot be tolerated by the Christian conscience.

(3) Centers of economic power have been formed which are not responsible to any organ of the community and which in practice constitute something in the nature of a tyranny over the lives of masses of men.

(4) The only forms of employment open to many men and women, or the fact that none is open at all, prevent them from finding a sense of Christian vocation in their daily life.

HOSTILITY TO CHRISTIANITY OF SOME MOVEMENTS WHICH HAVE ARISEN IN CONSEQUENCE OF THESE EVILS

We are witnessing new movements which have arisen in reaction to these evils but which combine with their struggle for social justice the repudiation of all religious faith. Aware of the reality of sin, the church knows that no change in the outward ordering of life can of itself eradicate social evil. The church, therefore, cannot surrender to the utopian expectations of these movements and it must unequivocally reject their godlessness, but in doing so it must recognize that Christians in their blindness to the challenging evils of the economic order have been partly responsible for the antireligious character of these movements.

THE RESPONSE OF THE CHRISTIAN TO THESE CHALLENGES

Christians have a double duty — both to bear witness to their faith within the existing economic order and to test all economic institutions in the light of their understanding of God's will. The forces of evil against which Christians have to contend are found not only in the hearts of men as individuals, but have entered into and infected the structure of society and there also must be combated.

In spite of agreement on the necessity of effecting changes in the economic order Christians have no reason to expect that they will always find themselves in agreement on particular issues or belonging to one political party. This is especially true of issues in which technical factors predominate, concerning which honest differences of judgment must be expected. Nor do Christians escape those deeper differences of social conviction which are rooted in differing economic, geo-

graphical and historical circumstances. The very recognition of this fact by all groups within the church might well mitigate the extremism to which each group is tempted. The church should be a fellowship in Christ which transcends differences of judgment and divergences of action in relation to the concrete economic situation.

CHRISTIAN TEACHING IN RELATION TO THE ECONOMIC ORDER

The church can give guidance which is less general than the basic theological teaching emphasized above and which is less particular than advice concerning specific programs and specific political decisions. The basis of such guidance is to be found in the affirmations of faith concerning God as creator and redeemer, the nature of man, and the commandment of love. We suggest three ways in which these affirmations of faith can become the basis for the guidance which the church can give its members relative to economic life.

(1) The Christian message should deal with long range goals, standards and principles by means of which every concrete situation and every proposal for improving it must be tested. Implicit in many of these principles is Christian teaching about property, and this is therefore a subject to which Christians should give special attention.

(2) The Christian message should throw a searchlight on the actual facts of the existing situation and, in particular, reveal the human consequences of present forms of economic behavior. What, in isolation, seems to be purely destructive criticism is a necessary part of the total process by which constructive change is brought about.

(3) The Christian message should make clear the obstacles to economic justice in the human heart, especially those that are present in the hearts of people within the church.

IMMEDIATE CHRISTIAN ACTION

Action by the Churches

(a) *Reform of Their Own Institutional Life.* A church can offer a convincing example in the social and economic sphere only when it has set its own house in order.

(b) *Development of New Machinery for Research and Action.* The church should be adequately equipped for the pur-

pose of study and research in the economic sphere, and also for witness and action. The cooperation of the laity with the clergy in this connection is indispensable.

(c) *Integration of Work and Worship.* There should be no discontinuity between daily business in the world and specifically religious activities. The unity of work and worship must be re-established in the experience of men and women.

Action by Christians

(a) *Action within the Existing Economic Order.* Christians must bear witness to the faith they profess in the daily practice of industry, commerce and the professions. A wide field for Christian action also lies open in the administrative work of local and national government bodies, the cooperative movement and many other agencies of social service.

(b) *Group Experiments.* During periods of transition such as the present there is a peculiar opportunity for groups of Christians to experiment along possible lines of advance in community life.

(c) *Changing the Economic Order.* For reasons which have been suggested above the Christian must be prepared to take sides and participate in political and other forms of group action.

IV. CHURCH, COMMUNITY AND STATE IN RELATION TO EDUCATION

The lengthy report of this group deals with the problem of the respective spheres and mutual relations of church, community and state in so far as they may be educating or may claim the right to educate the same persons. The first section sets forth certain characteristics of church, community and state which affect the problem. The church, obviously, is a fellowship of free persons, under law to Christ, redemptive, supra-national, super-racial, supra-class and eternal. But the church cannot substantiate her claim to be all these things because she can neither speak nor act as one universal community — which affects her capacity to discharge her own particular function in education.

Among present circumstances which complicate the relations of church, community and state in education, attention is called to the secularization of modern life, man's faith in his power to direct his own destiny, social disintegration, the weakening of family ties, the shift of interest in education, the rise of new educational agencies, and the increasing intervention of the state in education. The four major issues on which church and state conflict in education are stated to be freedom, social disintegration, control of youth movements, and modern knowledge, method and technique.

Under the last heading it is stated that the situation makes on the church a double demand. She must keep abreast of all educational improvements, but must realize that no technique alone will suffice for the building up of the whole man into Christ. The spirit of Christ must be mediated through persons to persons. The church must proclaim with power that without the Christian gospel there can be no final attainment of mental and spiritual health. If the church is to discharge her teaching duty she must bring her communions into a common front on educational issues and unite her forces in fulfilling this urgent task.

The report then sums up the basic assumptions which are believed to underlie an education acceptable to Christians, and presses the necessity of formulating a philosophy of education from the Christian standpoint and of developing a psychology which does not disregard the significance of religious experience. Comprehensive statements set forth the educational task of the church through her own institutions and membership, and the relation of the church to public education where the government is responsive to Christian opinion, and end with a section, perhaps the most eagerly awaited, on the task of the church in regard to

Christian education in a non-Christian environment. A pregnant sentence states that " the church is at one with all true scholarship in every sphere in insisting that education may not submit to the bias of propaganda, but must preserve the pure and disinterested pursuit of truth." The report ends with a paragraph which goes to the heart of the matter. The church's largest contribution to education, it is stated, like her supreme ministry to human life, is her gospel with its interpretation of existence and its inspiration to live worthily. " It is all-important that the gospel should supply the presuppositions of all education, by whatever agency it is given, and create the spiritual atmosphere which pervades every institution of true learning."

After a discussion in which fifteen delegates participated the conference gave unanimous general approval to this report.

V. THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH AND THE WORLD OF NATIONS

Of this report, whose making I have already described in some detail, Basil Mathews well says: " No more searching, trenchant, and challenging statement on the revolutionary function of the church in the world of nations, and especially in face of the issues of war and peace, has ever come from any representative world Christian gathering than that unanimously adopted by the conference. Nineteen speakers, presenting every possible viewpoint, joined in the discussion, while forty-two others for whom no time could be found intimated their desire to speak and were asked to contribute their suggestions in written form."

Any summary of this section's statements must be inadequate. They should be read and pondered in the whole context of the reports. We are called, the conference said, to believe in the power and love of God and to realize that

today the Christian community is not only for the first time coextensive with the habitable globe, but increasingly realizes that it is itself one. It is ecumenical, a world factor whose unity is in Christ. Following is a summary of the statements:

In a world of fear, tension and disillusionment the church's first duty is to call men to repentance and faith. The world belongs to God; victory has been won in Jesus Christ.

The central element in the church's testimony in regard to international relations is the fact of its own ecumenical character. The church must therefore press on with the supreme task of the evangelization of the world, realize in fact her own true character by increasing the ecumenical consciousness of her members, assert in virtue of her knowledge of Christ that all men are brethren, and bring to bear upon all human situations the insight into human nature and the transforming power which Christ gives.

Christians can never equate any form of international order with the kingdom of God; at the same time, their attitude toward specific proposals within that realm must be governed by their understanding of the purpose of God in Christ.

Relations between states have not been brought under the rule of law in the same way as those between citizens or groups within a single state. Law and force are not conjoined in the international sphere. Whether the world moves toward a federal organization, or toward a closer cooperation of sovereign states, the evil of unconditional national sovereignty has to be faced. A special responsibility of Christians lies in the creation among all nations of the spirit which will support the fabric of international law.

A crucial need is the securing of such necessary changes in the international order as may remove acknowledged injustice and provide for growth and development. Such changes depend upon the action of governments. The churches should take measures to secure adequate factual knowledge and should move governments to adopt policies that will make for equality of opportunity, even at the expense of temporary sacrifice.

The conference, facing the attempts that have been made to achieve a better international order, recognizes the need

for revision in the structure of the League of Nations, and the failure of member states to observe their compacts. At the same time it welcomes the successes gained by the league and affirms both that the idea on which it was founded remains true, and that no rival method of realizing that idea exists. Similarly it welcomes the provision of an international tribunal for the settlement of justiciable disputes. But there are characteristically Christian ways of peace-making which the church has yet to explore.

War is a defiance of the righteousness of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. No justification of war may obscure this truth. For the Christian, the need both to obey the absolute law of love and to do what is best in a given situation leads to agonizing difficulty. Opposite views of right decision in the matter of participation in war are taken on religious grounds by Christians. The church must recognize that this perplexity arises from the sin in which its members are implicated, but must not acquiesce in the continuance of the differences. The Christian fellowship meanwhile must fully embrace those who take different views. Christians are called on to confess their own share in the guilt of war, to pray for their enemies, and to labor in every way against war and for peace.

Among the practical steps which churches should undertake are the following: (*a*) to banish from the churches racial barriers which are a denial of their ecumenical character; (*b*) to develop the interdependence of the church by increasing mutual help; (*c*) to labor for the removal of hindrances to religious freedom; (*d*) to educate the members of the churches in the meaning of their membership in the universal church; (*e*) to foster education in the problems which underlie the achievement of a better international order; (*f*) to work for the limitations of armaments by common agreement among states; (*g*) to support in every way the organizations now working through the churches for peace, and to set up an adequate organization of the churches for common ecumenical study and action.

Dr. John Mackay, chairman of the group that framed this report, said he hoped that the work of this ecumenical movement would be done along two lines — by teamwork without compromise, and by thought with action. He

hoped that in the future of the movement what has been thought with clarity and said in love may be carried out with decision.

From a practical point of view the most creative work of the Oxford Conference is that connected with its action in recommending to the churches a much more unified, inclusive and authoritative world-wide organization than any now in existence. Because of its great importance and the prominence given to it in two full sessions at Oxford discussion of it at this point might seem natural. But as a matter of fact the Oxford debate on the world council proposed by the Committee of Thirty-five, which had been charged by both the Universal Christian Council and the World Conference on Faith and Order to study and make recommendations concerning the future of the ecumenical movement, was repeated in somewhat the same form at Edinburgh a few weeks later. The story of the actions of both conferences really constitutes one story in two parts. For the sake of clearness these ought not to be separated, and for the sake of historical order they seem to belong not here but at the end of the account of what happened at Edinburgh, which I propose to give later.

Before leaving Oxford for Edinburgh we will therefore take only a glance at the great session in the Town Hall at which the question of the recommendations for the creation of a world council of churches came to a vote. There had been prolonged debate both on the floor and in the corridors and college halls wherever delegates met together. Difficulties and differences had been pronounced. Many predicted that any such action would "split the conference wide open." Even the complete unanimity of the remarkable Committee of Thirty-five — whose personnel I shall describe in the final chapter of this

book — left some unimpressed and fearful of one-sided influences or emphases.

It was ten-thirty on Thursday evening, July 22, when the chairman put the question to the house. At first, as a veritable forest of hands went up, it seemed as if there were complete and surprising unanimity. But when the call came for the negative vote there appeared to be two delegates in opposition — one from Wales and one from Scotland, both Anglicans, who frankly said that they feared the creation of a world council would retard, if it did not obscure, the work of the Faith and Order part of the ecumenical movement and likewise retard rather than advance the ultimate complete organic reunion of all Christendom.

As over against the four hundred and twenty-three votes favoring the world council proposals, this degree of opposition, even though it was obviously deeply conscientious, could not seriously dampen the enthusiasm of the conference over what had been done that night. And as later developments proved, modifications in the form of the proposals met so well the difficulties of the principal opponent of the plan that he found himself able to support it when it came before the Edinburgh Conference.

To those who were acquainted with the short and not too impressive history of world-wide Christian cooperation across denominational lines, that evening will always stand out as a time when God wrought mightily in his living church. Its consequences may be felt through many succeeding centuries. Why this is so, and what is involved in the proposals, I shall try to explain in detail later on.

The inspiring closing service at Oxford took place on Sunday afternoon, July 25, following the morning communion of which I have already spoken. It was a time of

thanksgiving and dedication. The very fact that almost without exception the delegates remained for it — despite the long two weeks of work which had taxed their patience and endurance — was in itself impressive. Three speakers, Dr. John R. Mott, Dr. Marc Boegner, and Archbishop Eidem, representing the Anglo-Saxon, the French, and the Scandinavian nations, voiced briefly their convictions as to what the conference had brought into being and the fruits that might be expected to grow from it in the years to come. But most of the service was given to prayer, to worship and to meditation. It was led by the Archbishop of Canterbury, although many others participated, and three languages were used.

Central in the service were the periods of silence which were part of the act of intercession. The words of this intercession, I think, sufficiently reveal the spirit of that hour. The archbishop read each part and paused long enough to permit us to make our own personal petitions under the inspiration of his words.

As we thank God for what he has done for us let us pray for his blessing and inspiration in the work that lies ahead.

May he who has begun a good work in us continue it until the day when Christ comes into his own.

Let us think of those upon whom rests the responsibility for thinking out and carrying through the decisions taken as to the future of the ecumenical movement.

For the representatives of Faith and Order, Life and Work, and all other bodies concerned.

Silence.

Let us think of all that lies in our hands in carrying back to our churches and our countries the meaning of the conference, in helping others to see what we have seen, and to set themselves to the tasks entrusted to us.

Silence.

Let us pray once again for the whole church of Christ that it may be awakened from apathy, roused from cowardice and despondency, delivered from preoccupation with narrow and trivial interests, and kindled into new life.

Silence.

Let us pray for the world, remembering, before we separate from one another, the countries and peoples and churches in special distress and trial, making their sufferings and needs our own.

Silence.

As the service ended and the Oxford Conference became history, I thought of the sentences with which Dr. Edgar DeWitt Jones, president of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, had concluded his comment on the report of Section V — the Church Universal and the World of Nations. He had declared — and the truth of his observation was borne in upon me with peculiar force at St. Mary's that late July afternoon: " We came to Oxford talking about *our churches.* We shall go home talking about *the Church* — the only firm ground of hope, and ' to evildoers terrible as an army with banners.' "

IV

EDINBURGH LISTENS—AND THINKS COLLECTIVELY

BEFORE a congregation which the *Scotsman,* leading paper of Edinburgh, described as "the most cosmopolitan that has ever assembled under the roof of St. Giles' Cathedral," the Archbishop of York preached the sermon which marked the beginning of the Edinburgh Conference on Faith and Order. It was August third. Eight days before the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State had closed. During the intervening week the great number of persons who were delegates to both conferences had joined in the service at St. Paul's in London, had sought rest and recreation in England or Scotland, and had prepared themselves for a further two weeks of strenuous work in the interest of a more united Christian church.

Oxford had served to remind us that there is desperate need for that unity if the church is to bear its witness to the unique and indispensable place of Christ in human life. Edinburgh was to afford us the opportunity of looking within the church in order that a clear light might be thrown upon the differences which divide us and new roads to reunion plotted on the charts of tomorrow.

There was one notable, if incidental, difference between the two assemblies. Whereas at Oxford the great majority of the delegates had been strangers to one another, at Edinburgh they felt that they began their work as friends brought closer by the momentous days they had spent to-

gether exploring the relationships between church, state and society.

To see the great assembly gathering once more — for to many of us it seemed almost the same despite the difference of function and outward setting — was to have one's imagination stirred by memories of other days on Auld Reekie's famous "Royal Mile." The street which bears that nickname runs down the rocky eminence that dominates the Scottish capital, leading from the castle at the top to Holyrood palace at the bottom. Buildings famous in history crowd along it — the Assembly Hall of the Church of Scotland, the Municipal Council Chambers, St. Giles' Cathedral, the curiously gabled home of John Knox, the buildings of New College, theological department of Edinburgh University. Below, on one side, runs Princes street, perhaps the loveliest street in the world, and on the other lies the low, shadowy passage along which the Covenanters walked on their way to Greyfriars' Church, there to swear an allegiance which cost many of them their lives. Within the castle walls, topping the rock's highest point, rises the exquisite Scots' War Memorial, and nearby is the little square stone Chapel of St. Margaret, possibly the oldest place of worship in Scotland outside of Iona Island, whither St. Columbo brought the faith in the fourth century of the Christian era.

Such a setting, reminding one at almost every turn of rugged faith and unconquerable courage, of loyalties that changed the course of many a life and of martyrdom triumphantly endured, was indeed a worthy one for the council which gathered for worship in St. Giles' that August afternoon.

The cathedral itself — or the "High Kirk," as Scotsmen call it — despite its stern traditions and its relative simplicity is an impressive Gothic pile of native stone begun in the

twelfth century. Architecturally its most notable feature is the beautiful crownlike tower which dominates the city. The interior is satisfyingly lighted. The organ is one of the best voiced in Europe and the cathedral's remarkable acoustics do justice to its sonorous tones. St. Giles' stands but a few rods below the Assembly Hall of the Church of Scotland where the conference was to have its ordinary sessions; hence the use of the cathedral for worship was convenient and natural.

The service on that first day was colorful, and symbolic of the purpose which had brought these hundreds of delegates over land and sea. The service was conducted by a Presbyterian, the sermon was preached by an Anglican, and the Old and New Testament lessons were read by representatives of the Lutheran and Eastern Orthodox communions respectively. The Archbishop of York, Dr. Temple — a son, by the way, of a former Archbishop of Canterbury — did not preach mere generalities. He was direct, frank, specific and engagingly sincere. What struck public attention most in his sermon, judging from the newspaper accounts of it, was his admission that his own communion was notable for its exclusiveness and his statement that he felt division of this character to be " the greatest of all scandals in the face of the world." The unity of God's church, he declared, was and is a perpetual fact; but the world sees the sin of Christians more clearly than it sees the holiness and wholeness of the church. When that happens, and in whatever degree it happens, the witness of the church is weakened. How can it call men to worship of the one God if it is calling to rival shrines? How can it claim to bridge the divisions in human society — divisions between Greek and barbarian, bond and free, between white and black, Aryan and non-Aryan, employer and employed — if, when men are drawn into it, they find that another division

has been added to the old ones — a division of Catholic from Evangelical, of Episcopalian from Presbyterian or Independent? A church divided in its manifestation to the world cannot render its due service to God or to man.

Dr. Temple pointed out that one does not escape from sin by denying its consequences, and Christians cannot heal the breaches in the church's outward unity by regarding them as unimportant. To those who made the breaches the matters involved seemed worth dying for. They might now look back with a calmer wisdom and see how here or there a division which occurred could have been avoided by a more conciliatory temper and a more synthetic habit of mind. But it does not follow that we should now take all the divisions as they stand and merely agree to cooperate while still maintaining separate organizations. For in practice those separate organizations are bound to become competitors, however much they wish to cooperate.

The first great evil of such divisions is that they obscure their witness to the one gospel. The second is that through the division each party to it loses some spiritual treasure and none perfectly represents the balance of truth, so that the balance of truth is not presented to the world at all. We have left behind us the habit of believing that our own tradition is the whole of truth, and now look to see what parts of the " unsearchable riches of Christ " we have missed while others have had them; thus we are learning increasingly one from another.

In part, the archbishop continued, our progress toward unity is due to the needs of the world. It is not the task of the church to solve political problems or to devise contrivances for mitigating the effects of human sin. But it is the church's task to proclaim that the most oppressive evils under which the world groans are the fruit of sin; that only by eradication of that sin can these other evils be averted;

and that the only redeemer from sin is Jesus Christ, to whom we call the world that its sins may be removed and its divisions healed, and that it may find fellowship in him.

That proclamation, that invitation, we are bound as a church to make. But the world asks: "Have you found that fellowship yourselves? Why do your voices sound so various? When we pass from words to action, to what are you calling us? Is it to one family, gathered round one holy table, where your Lord is himself the host who welcomes all his guests? You know that it is not so. When we answer your united call we have to choose for ourselves to which table we will go, for you are yourselves divided in your act of deepest fellowship, and by your own traditions hinder us from a unity which we are ready to enjoy."

What is our answer to that complaint? Is it not true that Christians who have lately been converted in heathen lands, and even the ordinary lay folk who are rather detached from denominational preoccupations, are more ready to come together in face of the resurgence of paganism than are the leaders of ecclesiastical organizations, intent upon the maintenance of their tradition and upon keeping their organization in being and in working order? If it is true that in its deepest nature the church is always one, it is also true that today it is the so-called "churches" rather than any forces of the secular world which prevent that unity from being manifest and effective.

"I speak," said the archbishop, "as a member of one of those churches which still maintain barriers against completeness of union at the table of the Lord. I believe from my heart that we of that tradition are trustees for an element of truth concerning the nature of the church which requires that exclusiveness as a consequence, until this element of truth be incorporated with others into a fuller and worthier conception of the church than any of us hold to-

day. But I know that our division at this point is the greatest of all scandals in the face of the world. I know that we can only consent to it or maintain it, without the guilt of unfaithfulness to the unity of the gospel and of God himself, if it is a source to us of spiritual pain and if we are striving to the utmost to remove the occasions which now bind us as we think to that perpetuation of disunion. It should be horrible to us to speak or think of any fellow Christians as 'not in communion with us.' God grant that we may feel the pain of it, and under that impulsion strive the more earnestly to remove all that now hinders us from receiving together the one body of the one Lord, that in him we may become one body — the organ and vehicle of the one Spirit."

Continuing, the archbishop said that the ten years which have elapsed since the former conference on Faith and Order met at Lausanne have been a time of progressive unification. The unions consummated are chiefly, as is natural, between churches of similar polity; but there has been also a growth of understanding and appreciation among Christians of deeply sundered traditions. We are entering the second world conference with great encouragement from what God has done for us since the first. We must rejoice in and give thanks for the perpetual growth of other manifestations of the *una sancta* despite its divisions. The sister conference at Oxford has profoundly impressed the world; and it has approved a method whereby, if we also are led to approve it, the *una sancta* will be provided with a more permanent and more effectual means of declaring itself and its judgment than at any time for four hundred, perhaps for eight hundred, years. We deeply lament the absence from this collaboration of the great church of Rome — the church which more than any other has known how to speak to the nations so that the nations heard. But the assembling

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of two world conferences in one summer is itself a manifestation of the *una sancta,* the holy fellowship of those who worship God in Jesus Christ and look to him as the only Saviour of the world. Ten years ago our main concern was to state our several traditions in such a way that others would understand them truly, and that must still be our aim. But the divisions which we sought to overcome rose from the fact that traditions are just what they are and none other; division cannot be healed by the reiterated statement of them. We are here, said the archbishop, as representatives of our churches, but unless our churches are ready to learn from one another as well as to teach one another the divisions will remain. Therefore loyalty to our own churches, which have sent us here, will not best be expressed in a rigid insistence by each upon his own tradition. Our churches sent us here to confer about our differences with a view to overcoming them. As representatives of those churches each of us must be as ready to learn from others where his own tradition was erroneous or defective as to show to others its truth and strength. We meet as fellow pupils in a school of mutual discipleship.

Finally, the archbishop urged the delegates never to forget that though the purpose of their meeting was to consider the causes of their divisions, yet what made possible their meeting was their unity. They could not seek union if they did not already possess unity! Those who had nothing in common did not deplore their estrangement. It was because they were one in allegiance to one Lord that they sought and hoped for the way of manifesting that unity in their witness to him before the world.

The technical work of the conference began immediately after the service at St. Giles'. Like all the business sessions it was held in the remarkable auditorium of the Assembly

Hall of the Church of Scotland. This is a square room on the "Mound," with galleries on all four sides, the center of the gallery at the front being the royal box — for the king of England, although head of the Anglican Church, becomes a Presbyterian when he enters Scotland. (If this seems curious, you may put beside it the further fact that until recently the moderator of the Church of Scotland was Dr. Lang, brother of the Church of England's Archbishop of Canterbury!) The seating in the hall is so arranged that even on the main floor everyone faces the center, which is occupied by a large raised dais and an enclosed area for speakers, secretaries, translators and reporters. Thanks to the arrangement and the construction of the hall everything that is said, at whatever place, can be heard without amplifiers throughout the room, although it seats nearly two thousand persons. It is without question one of the finest rooms for a large deliberative assembly to be found anywhere in the world.

As the first business session opened the thought of all was directed back to 1910, more than a quarter of a century ago, when in that same room there met the World Missionary Conference, from which issued more results than from any other assembly in the life of the modern church. On the platform sat Dr. John R. Mott who, as a relatively young man, had been the chairman of that gathering. Today he stands among the elder statesmen despite the vigor of his mind and the ruggedness of his amazing physique. The Archbishop of York, who had been unanimously elected chairman of the present conference, referred to the fact that as a young student he himself had stood in the upper left-hand gallery in those creative days and received impressions which had changed his whole life. Particular reference was made by many to the American Episcopal bishop, Dr. Charles H. Brent, who at that time and in this

room had been inspired to organize the Faith and Order movement for the specific purpose of working toward Christian unity in the organic life of the church. Equally heart-stirring was it to see the leaders of the many Oriental churches united in the National Christian councils which have grown up under the administrative genius of Dr. Mott and the International Missionary Council — itself a product of the 1910 conference.

Memories and experiences like these dulled the edge of the cynical remarks made by some who were overwhelmed by the hopelessness of the task before the delegates. Here was visible and symbolic evidence that under God's guidance much had already been done to restore the church's lost unity and to plant the faith firmly in all the known world — something which, as Dr. Cavert reminded the Oxford Conference, had never before been true in the two thousand years of Christian history.

In anticipation of the tasks to be accomplished commissions had been appointed long in advance of the conference to carry on preparatory work in much the same manner as for the Oxford Conference. The commissions drew up preliminary reports on the four themes of the conference. These were quickly approved by the delegates, who then divided into four sections to deal with the themes: the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; the Church of Christ and the Word of God; the Church of Christ — Ministry and Sacraments; the Church's Unity in Life and Worship. To the casual reader these may sound like very remote and academic themes indeed. But when put into less theological language they are seen to cover exactly the questions which divide the churches of the world into countless denominations and sects. At the first World Conference on Faith and Order in Lausanne in 1927 agreement concerning the church's message was reached with relative ease.

But on other questions there has been and is no universal agreement — questions such as the meaning of our Lord's work in bringing by his "grace" new life to sinful man; the meaning of the "Word of God" which all churches claim to obey but which they define differently; the meaning and the right use of sacraments and an ordained ministry; and the meaning of unity itself in the life and worship of the church. This fourfold theme, therefore, engaged the attention of the conference not by arbitrary choice, but because experience had shown that if differences in these particulars could be resolved organic reunion would be brought within relatively easy reach of practical consummation.

If you ask for a more explicit definition of such a term as "grace" I would suggest that proposed by Dr. Buckham of California, who tells us that grace means "the free bestowal of the love of God through the revealing and redeeming Christ upon undeserving man in response to the exercise of faith awakened by His Spirit." Perhaps the other three themes of the conference do not at the moment need further definition. If you stop to consider them you will see, I think, that they are far from being merely academic or theoretical. Unfortunately theologians, like every other professional group in the world, have a technical language which the outsider finds very confusing. It is therefore necessary when they talk together to have at hand not only translators of French, German, Greek, Latin and other languages, but also interpreters to put their erudite discussions into words which do not look like candidates for a crossword puzzle to the ordinary reader — or, for that matter, to some of their fellows.

For instance, after a particularly technical theological discussion during the latter part of the conference, I overheard one Episcopal bishop say to another: "I went to a

theological seminary and graduated with honors. I have several degrees in theology. I thought I knew something about theology, but I don't know what those chaps were talking about!" This was, however, a very exceptional case. Underneath all the technical verbiage the delegates at Edinburgh were wrestling with problems of real concern to men and women of different traditions and different parts of this sadly divided world — problems which simply cannot be ignored if people are to make intelligent progress toward understanding and agreeing with one another.

It was something of that nature which fell to my lot to say at the opening of the regular program of the conference. Mr. William Paton of London and I had been asked by the chairman to prepare a statement which would make clear the relevance of Edinburgh's undertaking to the world situation in which the church must bear its witness. Since Mr. Paton deserves more credit by far than I for the final form of this statement and since it has a very direct bearing upon the work of the conference as a whole I hope I will not appear immodest if I quote it here.

This World Conference on Faith and Order meets at a time when throughout the world the hearts of men are burdened with perplexity, suffering, and fear of what may yet be coming. The years which have passed since the great gathering at Lausanne have proved, if that were needed, how incalculable are the affairs of men; the most outstanding events in that period — though we are now able to see how far back their causes may be traced — are such as none who assembled at Lausanne could have foreseen.

The feature of modern society on which witnesses in virtually all countries are agreed is the disintegration of established institutions, customs and ideas, not only in the spheres of politics and economics but also in those of morality and religion. In comparison with others there are countries that are still untroubled; but even there the forces of change are at work. There is widespread dissolution of the spiritual bonds and ac-

cepted organizing principles which have hitherto controlled and given meaning to common life. Among the causes which have brought about these effects are to be numbered the rapidly increasing ease and speed of intercommunication, bringing to the civilization of the East intimate contacts with that of the West and to the more primitive races of the world catastrophic change; the large-scale character of modern society which has for myriads almost destroyed the personal quality of life; the menace of war; and the horror of unemployment which destroys a man's sense of having a place in the world. Deeper than these things lies the spiritual insecurity of modern man in East and West alike. Old moralities decay because the convictions on which they rested are no longer held. Men do not know how they want to live, or by what social obligation they are willing to be governed; common standards cannot be assumed, men cannot reckon upon their neighbors, the spiritual unity of the community is everywhere disturbed. This disintegration is most acute among the primitive peoples, as in Africa, but it is present in many Eastern lands, where the conflict between the old faiths and the new civilization has been serious, and it is extensive also in our so-called Christendom, as may be most clearly seen in the change in common notions about the family and the relations of the sexes.

But this is only a part of the problem by which the church is faced. There is in man an inborn longing for community. Along with the tendency to disintegration in established ideas and institutions goes another — the tendency to bind society together in the acceptance of claims and allegiances that may in a strict sense be called absolute. Especially for youth in many lands the ideals of freedom, equality and tolerance on the one hand, and authority, obedience, and surrender on the other, seem mutually exclusive. It is the latter that they choose. Not only for the youth but for whole populations is it now true that the people, the class, the state, or some other single element taken out of the whole of life, is given absolute value; round this center of unquestioned authority the life of the community is remade. Thus in lands such as Japan, Turkey, Russia, Poland, Italy and Germany — to name a few only — powerful movements are at work which, making use of the methods which political power and modern technique place at their disposal — and above all of education — are trying to build up a

new order upon a totalitarian basis. This is the new idolatry — a created entity being worshiped in its Creator's stead. Christians must not fail to observe the successes that have been won by such methods, and to ask themselves how far their own failure in witness has led to the growth of such forms of moral leadership; equally they must recognize that because they are essentially idolatrous all such forms of life are in the last resort incompatible with a belief in the sovereignty of God or with a Christian view of the dignity of man, for whom the Lord Jesus Christ was content to die.

This double process whereby a society that has lost its old moorings seeks life, meaning and order in obedience to new gods, is perhaps the most characteristic feature of our time. Of more specific problems it will be enough to mention racialism, economic dislocation and war.

But it is in the fact of war and the universal fear of impending war that our civilization most plainly shows its inherent disorder and its need of radical cleansing and redemption. The years are not many that separate the Western world, and much also of the East and of Africa, from the horror that haunts their memory. The slaughter of the flower of every people, the poisoning of the wells of truth by organized lying, the prostitution of religion to national ends — all these things are known and remembered, and in every people without any exception there is a profound loathing of war and a longing that it may never come again. Yet every nation is preparing for it, and those that most hate it and are most resolved never to provoke it prepare not less resolutely than the rest. Can there ever be offered to mankind a plainer proof that the deepest need of all is not clear understanding nor technical efficiency, but the renewing of the springs of moral life? The thing that we would not, that we do.

It is a striking witness of the perverseness of human nature that an epoch of history in which intercourse has become more than ever possible between different parts of the world should be marked by a growth in the evil of racialism and of nationalism based upon race. Christians have to consider not only the horrors that accompany the color bar in certain countries, or the recrudescence of Jew-baiting in so-called Christian lands, but the still graver fact that racial barriers, both against the non-white man and against the Christian of Jewish blood, are

to be found within the church itself! It should be no matter for surprise that the religion of Mohammed can in some lands plausibly offer itself to non-white people as the only religion in which real equality and brotherhood are possible. The resentment of Eastern races at the aloofness of the white man and at his economic and political advantage has long been keen; it is now increased by a diminution in moral regard.

It is perhaps in the economic sphere that the change in the world's thinking is most evident. The accustomed order has long been challenged on moral and even on Christian grounds, but it achieved a relative efficiency, and that outweighed all else. Now, when the paradox of poverty in the midst of an attainable plenty is obvious to all, the challenge of the present order to the Christian understanding of life is gaining a more attentive hearing. This challenge is made in four chief ways. The great inequalities which characterize society mean that multitudes are denied the necessary conditions for health and opportunity which are taken for granted by others; this evil is most fully evident in the case of children. The spirit of acquisitiveness is — despite all disclaimers — enhanced by the system. When a society gives highest honor to those who have most wealth it is virtually certain that the scale of values in that society will be perverted. Irresponsibility is increased, both among those great organizations or powerful individuals on whom the whole lives of masses of the people depend, and among the poor for whom the economy within which they live seems to be subject to no social control. Again, in much of modern economic life there is a denial of Christian vocation, in the kind of work that many have to do and the conventions that surround it, in the fact of unemployment, and in the conflict between profit and the public good.

In such a world the church lives and witnesses. She is faced by tasks so tremendous that they can only be undertaken in the clear recognition that they *are* humanly impossible. Yet there is no lack of evidence that the promises of God live and are strong, and that God is still One that heareth prayer.

The note of evangelism is heard today throughout the whole church more constantly and clearly than was the case in quite recent years. Under great differences of form a common movement is to be discerned. Within the German Evangelical Church a great spiritual revival is at work. From the Preach-

ing Mission by which so recently a great part of the United States of America was moved, to the Indian untouchables pouring into the Christian church, is a far cry, and yet in both alike, beneath the vast differences of circumstance, there is the sense of need for God in Christ. The Indian untouchable, now Christian, who testified, " Once we were *dogs.* Only Jesus could make *men* out of us," was speaking from out of the heart of humanity. Two things are true, both that there are in wide circles an alertness and desire, a turning to religion to see whether after all it may not have the needed word to speak; and also that a church which had in some of its parts grown almost afraid of evangelism is rediscovering the joy and glory of it. It is only when we look at the wide sweep of the church's work all over the world that we can comprehend at all the greatness of what is happening. There are great ingatherings in India — but in Africa still greater, though so little known. In China, where only fifteen years ago a powerful anti-Christian movement swept the country, there is by general consent a great turning toward religion, and not least to the Christian religion.

It is well to recall such facts — not to dull the edge of that self-examination and repentance of which all Christians are considerably in need, but that we may take courage and find faith in God. If the last century saw a great growth in secularism, it saw also in the missionary movement throughout the world the most remarkable expansion of the church in all Christian history. We forget sometimes how even in the West the record is not one of retreat and failure but of large advance. Even the deepest suspicion of statistical evidence cannot wholly destroy the significance of the fact that at the time of the American Revolution only five per cent of the nation were counted as members of the churches, while today one half can be so counted.

The church of Christ is not engaged today in the heroic or even stoical labor of announcing to the world a gospel that is irrelevant to it, scoring here and there little and unimportant successes but gaining no ground in the center. It has in trust *the Truth,* and *there is no other truth on which mankind can live.* Those who live without it do *not* live *for* the ends which God intends, nor *as* he ordained. Christians may be penitent for their sloth and divisions and sensitive to the often ill-adapted

methods they employ; they may be aware of hypocrisy and insincerity; but nothing may be allowed to dim the brightness of the fact that the heart of the church's message is not merely *relevant* to the need of the world but is that which *alone* can help and heal.

Two instances will suffice. There is among good men and women of all nations a longing for international brotherhood, and much effort has gone into the framing of schemes that would help to bring it nearer. But is it remembered, even among Christians, what priceless gifts the church brings to those who thus seek? For the church is more than international. To her the first thing is not the nation, and the unity hoped for is not built upon the foundation of separate nations consenting together. To her the unity of mankind is not an aspiration but a fact. She begins with the tremendous fact of God's love in Jesus Christ, whereby the life of the church is constituted. She knows that rooted in this love there is a fellowship which men do not create but into which they are brought. A church that is truly ecumenical and that realizes its own universal and supra-national character has priceless boons to confer upon the world. It could supply through the fact of its own brotherhood some of that community of moral conviction which is needed for the support of international law, since that law, like the law of a nation, rests upon the basis of a common acceptance of moral custom and ideas.

Again, we have seen already that the modern world, and especially the younger part of it, wants community. It would prefer to subordinate itself utterly to the claim of the state and of race or class rather than be individually free, if that were the only choice. What does the church offer? It offers a fellowship with God in Christ and in him with other men; a fellowship dedicated to all the labor of the kingdom of God, an adventure and a labor in which a man may be glad to lose himself. It is no selfish individualism, neither pietistic nor moralistic, yet a living fellowship of worship, service and sacrifice. But it is never less than a fellowship of persons who are infinitely dear to the heart of God and ennobled by the sacrifice of Jesus for them. There is a suppression of the individuality which is death; there is a losing of the life which is life indeed. The true balance of individual and society is to be found in the revelation of the redeemed man in the redeemed commu-

nity; love the motive to service and love the bulwark of a true freedom.

That the church should in many lands today be persecuted, her freedom invaded, her witness inhibited, is perhaps a proof that in spite of all her weaknesses she is at the heart of the world's struggle. The fact that Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant churches are alike affected shows that the movement is not merely directed against " clericalism." It is fundamentally about Christianity that men are fighting: Christ and his teaching, particularly his cross, seem to many an offense against nationalism.

It is necessary then to approach the questions of the church's faith and order and of the achievement of her unity with a sense of the tragic quality of the time and of the tremendous issues that wait — or do not wait — our word. It is not too much to say that a divided church — divided as we are divided today — is totally unable to offer more than a caricature of the gospel. We speak of unity, brotherhood, concord, and renewing power to those who are torn by caste division and color prejudices or are meditating on class war — but we cannot overcome our own rivalries. We offer long-winded explanations of our notorious uncharitableness to one another; yet of the deep unity which does in fact join Christians together we can offer little practical evidence to the world. We know that Christian education in national life is threatened more by denominational rivalry than by anything else — the instances of weakness and failure that are organically connected with disunion could be multiplied a hundredfold.

Our conference is, then, *highly relevant* to the time. It may be — and often is — thought that any discussion of deep theological problems is necessarily academic, irrelevant to life. The trouble is only that its real relevance is not appreciated! No complex process of building can be efficient without the work of abstract thought.

Yet let us beware lest we suffer the presence of the unwholesome argument that unity is to be desired in order that the church may be efficient and successful, and forget the judgment of God in which we all stand. We are to be, *not successful,* but obedient. Unity is not the condition of our efficiency; it is the form under which we may express the ineffable knowledge of the common life in Christ. Let us therefore approach

these great themes that invite our thought and prayer in a spirit of desperate earnestness. The world calls, and that is a great and terrible thing; but how much more terrible, how poignant, how dread in judgment, how appealing in love, is the call of our Lord himself!

Following this statement a moving plea for unity was made by the Right Reverend Dr. V. S. Azariah, bishop of Dornakal, an impressive figure in his bright purple cassock. Incidentally, though he is an Indian Dr. Azariah speaks beautiful English. He began by pointing out that God had used the experience of the Christian West to found churches all over the world.

" We thank you for this ministry, and we thank God for you," he declared, " but we want you to take us seriously when we say that the problem of unity is one of life and death for us. Do not give your aid to keep us separate, but instead lead us to union, so that you and we may go forward together to fulfill the prayer that we may be one."

Dr. Azariah stressed the fact that the mission field did present the greatest example for Christian unity. The goal and hope of Indian Christians, he said, was to see one church for India. Out of three hundred and fifty million people in India there were only six million Christians, while in China the proportion was even less. " It is necessary for us to form a united front against the anti-Christian forces that confront us on every side," he stated in conclusion.

Certain aspects of the European situation were presented by Pasteur Marc Boegner of France when he commented on the statement concerning the church's witness in the world today. In the political world, he said, the outstanding fact was the Spanish war and the grave danger with which it still threatened Europe. In the economic world appeared a heart-rending paradox: depression and wide-

spread unemployment finding their chief remedy in a new armament race. Any sudden stoppage of armament manufacture would mean catastrophe for the working classes. An international economic order which would restore the possibility of circulation of capital and currency was therefore necessary.

In the spiritual world, Dr. Boegner continued, non-religious and antireligious faiths were spreading. Idols such as the state, the party, the race, the people, were being substituted for the God of Christianity, and in some of the big countries the individual was being absorbed by the group or the community.

" From the point of view of a dynamic Christianity," he asked, " what must be the witness which all the churches must bear to Jesus Christ in this world, the world which we are to keep before our eyes? To ask the question moves us at once to humiliation and repentance, and to make clear the call to manifest to the world in one faith and one common consecration the unity of the body of Christ."

On this note was completed the first full day's program.

Unlike the conference at Oxford, the Edinburgh gathering had very few general sessions during its opening week. One advantage of this procedure was that the sessions which did take place stood out very clearly. In the morning session on August 4 Dr. Temple made an address in which he described the purposes and methods of the conference. He indicated that only such decisions on findings as could win unanimous support would be officially presented to the churches who had sent delegates. He felt that the way to secure a unanimous vote was not to obscure any real differences, but rather to bring them out into the open — for any unity worth having must do justice to the truth contained in all the different traditions. " Our aim,"

he declared, " must be to combine loyalty to the truth we have ourselves received with readiness to learn also the truth which others have received but which we ourselves have either missed or failed to appreciate in full."

He reminded us that we were not a society for theological discussion only. We were to consider also the reasons for the churches' disunion and to find if possible the way to union. In all our discussions, therefore, we must keep preeminent the question, Are our differences such as need hinder the union of those who hold various views in one visible church? To illustrate what he meant Dr. Temple took the first main theme of the conference, the meaning of grace. He thought that if we are allowed to interpret for ourselves the great phrase of the Protestant reformers, " Salvation by grace and faith alone," we would all be prepared to agree to it. If so, need any diverse interpretations hold us apart? He thought that any hesitation we might feel in answering that question might be due to the very sort of misunderstanding which such a conference as we were holding could remove.

In commending the theme of the second section to those who were to deal with it, Dr. Temple said that the problem of the relation of the church to the Word of God — as well as that of the relation of the ministry and sacraments to the life of the church, the theme of Section III — involved discussion of a question whose answer people assume is self-evident; namely, What is the nature of the church? The ten years since the Lausanne Conference had persuaded him, he said, that this was really the central question. To answer it every Christian of whatever denomination would naturally turn to the biblical record which tells how our Lord, by the triumph of the cross and by the act of God in his resurrection, fashioned a new community, the people of the new covenant, who by the power of the

Spirit are incorporated in the living Christ so as to be his body in the world. If this simple statement of the origin of the Christian church was accepted, it would become clear, the archbishop thought, that the relation of the church to the Word of God is twofold:

> First, the church is created by the Word of God; but second, the church's life is itself an utterance of that Word. For the Word of God is a fount of fellowship, even as fellowship is the characteristic manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Consequently redemption is from the antagonisms of the world into the fellowship of disciples; and this is the church. That is why the church — the fellowship of the redeemed — is part of its own message and even appears in the creed as an object of its own faith. This, after all, is only another way of saying that true love of God must needs unite us in love for one another.
>
> Similarly when we turn to the subject of Section III, we have to ask whether the nature of the church itself is such that its structure is vitally relevant to its function, or whether its structure is to be determined from time to time by considerations of practical utility. Or, to put it otherwise, are the sacraments special expressions of a sacramental character inherent in the life of the church itself, so that there is an intimate relation between their essential nature and the visible order of the church? Or are they only the expressions of the sacramental principle, so that no outward order in the church has any special relevance to their significance and efficiency?

Two other important considerations the archbishop felt should be kept in view throughout the conference: First, the fact that many of the different views are not antagonistic but really complement one another; second, the desirability of approaching as learners such differences as do seem to be irreconciliable. If we believe, as we must, that there is truth in our own tradition, let us remember that there is truth also in those traditions which others hold and which may seem incompatible with our own. Since truth is one, any seeming incompatibility must be due to

our misapprehension. When we find the truth we will inevitably realize our essential oneness, hidden from us now because of our partial understanding. "We shall hear one another," the archbishop concluded, "not with any wish to refute but always with the wish to appreciate. Above all we shall be listening to the voice of the one Lord, the head of the body wherein we are all members, that he may teach us the truth which shall unite us all."

After the sessions which I have briefly described the conference as a whole met only occasionally until the four sections were ready to begin reporting the results of their discussions. But services of worship for all delegates and visitors took place every day, usually in St. Giles' Cathedral. Here, as at the services in St. Mary's at Oxford, the unity of heart and spirit which was experienced tended to soften the intellectual and temperamental differences which inevitably emerged in the work of the conference. Indeed it was here that all of us sensed what lay deeper than words or clearly definable ideas — that there already exists a unity of the church which is the gift of God, a unity whose outward manifestation we all are seeking if we give heed to the significance of our Lord's thrice repeated prayer that his followers should be one in him and one with him in the Father. Thus under varied leadership, Catholic and Protestant, liturgical and nonliturgical, through music and prayer and silence, we were brought into a fellowship so complete that it answered our deepest yearnings. And as I became more and more fully aware of the oneness that underlies our external differences in the church, I said to myself — and others must have had the same thought — "If only we had on a wide scale what we have here in this company of Christian men and women from all over the world we should actually possess that for which the divided

church waits and without which the world will not believe — that which Christ died to bring." Particularly did this thought arise on the occasion when the members of the conference partook of communion at St. Giles' after the rite of the Scottish Presbyterian Church.

The process of group discussion and drafting which occupied the bulk of the time at Edinburgh can be described only in general terms and illustrated only in a few representative instances. The authorities of the university had generously put at our disposal the classrooms of New College, and the conference was obliged to use a great many of them as its four sections broke up into numerous subsections. Through skillful management practically all the delegates were enabled to take actual part in the work, as they had done at Oxford. Again it was a case of cooperative thinking on a large scale, directed by able leaders to the points where it was by common consent most needed and kept away from irrelevant matters.

The leaders of the four main sections were the following:

Section I — The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Chairman — Bishop Lehtonen, Evangelical Church of Finland

Vice-chairman — The Rev. Dr. W. F. Lofthouse, Methodist Church of Great Britain

Reporter — The Rev. Professor William Manson, Church of Scotland, Edinburgh

Section II — The Church of Christ and the Word of God

Chairman — The Rev. Dr. G. W. Richards, Evangelical and Reformed Church, United States

Vice-Chairman — Dr. H. G. Wood, Society of Friends, Birmingham, England
Reporter — The Rev. G. A. Ankar, Church of Sweden

SECTION III — THE CHURCH OF CHRIST — MINISTRY AND SACRAMENTS

Chairman — The Rev. Professor D. M. Baillie, Church of Scotland, St. Andrews
Vice-chairman — The Rev. Professor Hamilcar Alivisatos, Greek Orthodox Church
Reporter — The Bishop of Gloucester

SECTION IV — THE CHURCH'S UNITY IN LIFE AND WORSHIP

Chairman — The Rev. M. E. Aubrey, Baptist Church, Moderator of the Federal Council of the Free Churches of England
Vice-chairman — The Rev. Francis Cho-Min Wei, Anglican Church in China
Reporter — The Rev. Dean W. L. Sperry, Congregational Church, United States

What each of these sections had to say will appear, at least in part, in the chapter entitled " Edinburgh Speaks."

Especially memorable among the activities of the Edinburgh Conference were two Sunday evening meetings of a kind all too unusual. One could hope that they might be widely duplicated throughout the church. At these meetings certain members of the conference were asked to tell in simple, direct language what the experience of Christian life within their communions had meant to them personally. Seven widely different points of view were thus presented in an atmosphere of intense and sympathetic in-

terest. Particularly marked was the appreciation shown the statements made by an English Quaker, Carl Heath; a British Anglican, Lord Robert Cecil; a prominent leader of the Greek Orthodox Church, Professor Alivisatos; and the moderator of the United Church of South India, Principal C. J. Lucas. Wider divergence of origin, theology, church theory and practice it would be difficult to find. Here were a Friend who believed in no outward symbols or sacraments; an Episcopalian who cherished the liturgical expressions of his highly formal communion; a Greek Catholic whose church shared the love of mysticism of the ancient East; and a nonconfessional Protestant who had himself been successively a member of the Lutheran, Reformed, Congregational and "United" churches and whose wife was of Anglican and Roman Catholic background.

In very characteristic ways all revealed the vitality of the same great religious experience and bore eloquent testimony to the fact that despite the differences of race, culture, tradition and education which separated them — not to mention the great contrast between their respective branches of the church — they were nevertheless one in a sense which might escape definition but which could not be denied by any who heard and understood their words. Perhaps the impression on me was the deeper for the fact that I have had the good fortune of knowing all these men personally and of seeing in their activity the genuineness of their devotion to our Lord. But I am sure that even to strangers they must have brought the same conviction, if in a lesser degree. Indeed I heard comments which definitely indicated that this was so.

Many messages from all parts of the world, both from individuals and churches, were of course received by the

Edinburgh Conference. Two were of such unusual interest and significance that I must mention them especially. The first was from the head of the Benedictine — Roman Catholic — priory of Amay-sur-Meuse in Belgium, who addressed to Canon Hodgson, the conference secretary, and through him to the conference itself, a warm, friendly letter of good will expressing his regret that his own communion was not officially represented and his heartfelt prayer that God would make plain to all the way to ultimate unity in one visible and universal church. "Though we are absent from Edinburgh," he concluded, "we are with you in heart." In somewhat similar vein Dr. A. J. McDonald, Roman Catholic archbishop of St. Andrews and Edinburgh, wrote to the conference, adding that he hoped to meet personally with the delegates of the non-Roman churches.

To both these letters the conference authorized its chairman, Dr. Temple, to reply. Part of the reply, which was approved by the delegates, declares: "It has been a great sorrow to us that we have not had the fellowship and assistance of our Roman Catholic brethren in our enterprise and labors. We are both moved and encouraged by the knowledge that your prayers are joined with ours that we may be guided by the Holy Spirit as we seek to learn from God his will for ourselves and for his whole church."

Those who know the tragic bitterness of the struggle waged for four centuries between the Roman and the Protestant communions in Europe will not fail to see in such an exchange of friendly messages at least the first faint glimmering of the dawn of a better day.

V

EDINBURGH SPEAKS

If the Oxford Conference found it difficult to formulate its reports and gain their acceptance, the Edinburgh Conference found it even more difficult. Edinburgh had to decide what it might say with entire unanimity, for concerning the many differences it must say only what all could agree to. At times during the week or more when the sections were wrestling with their problems many felt discouraged and uncertain. Could any worth-while agreement be reached? I recall meeting a friend who had just come from a discussion of this kind and looked a bit depressed. " Are you making any progress? " I asked. " Oh, I suppose so," he replied. " We add a new adverb about once every two hours! "

But when the reports began to come before the full conference for discussion and acceptance — or rejection — the tide definitely turned. It was such a surprise for many to find any agreement possible that they reacted literally like the youth delegate who confessed, when some member of a very different communion expressed a view in which he could concur, that he felt sure he must have misunderstood him.

The debates on each report were long and careful. If anything, they were fuller than those at Oxford, and greater divergencies appeared. Yet one by one the final forms of statement were arrived at — not by watering down and denaturing the product, but by patient search for the kernel of truth which all felt must be hidden in the meas-

ure of meal ground by the slow turning of ecclesiastical mills. Many of the debates were brilliant. The pages of the excellent Edinburgh newspapers bore testimony to that fact in column after column of verbatim reports which theology-loving Scots doubtless devoured *in toto.*

It is difficult, indeed dangerous, to try to summarize the reports. They really need to be read in their full form; to alter the wording of any of them might be to distort or misrepresent their meaning. It is to be hoped that readers of this account will get the reports in full, as indeed all serious friends of Christian unity should do. In what follows, then, will be included only the introductory portion of the full report, representative excerpts of the reports of the first three sections, and large parts of the report of the fourth, which has particular relevance to the thinking and acting of all Christians, whether they be theologically inclined or not.

The introduction is in the form of a review of ten years' progress in church union and was written by Dr. H. Paul Douglass, secretary of the Commission on Christian Unity of the American Federal Council of Churches.

Looking back to the first great Conference on Faith and Order held in Lausanne in 1927, we thankfully recognize the real progress made since then in the field of church union.

Its detailed history is written in the book by Dr. H. Paul Douglass, *A Decade of Objective Progress in Church Unity, 1927–36,* which was prepared for us under the direction of the Commission on the Church's Unity in Life and Worship. We cannot better open this report than by offering a factual summary of the most important steps taken during the last ten years in every continent of the world.

The specific unions or approaches to union which the decade has witnessed have sometimes concerned churches in different nations, as, for example, those between the Anglican communion on the one side and the Old Catholic churches of Europe and the churches of the Orthodox communion on

the other; but they have generally been confined to churches within their several nations. A special complication has been experienced in connection with mutual approaches among the younger churches, particularly in the Orient and in Africa, the control of which still rests partially with parent churches in the older Christian lands.

The total number of active unity movements is impressive. Nearly half of them have occurred in North America, a fact which reflects the exceptionally large number of previous divisions needing to be healed. And nearly as many are to be found in Asia as in Europe, a fact to be explained in part by the immense pressure of non-Christian civilizations which forces the churches together, and in part by the practical necessities of the situation. The majority of the unions achieved have thus occurred between churches not previously sundered by the profounder differences of theological or cultural tradition; so that, in the main, unity has as yet been fully reached only in the easier situations.

Moreover, the group of movements toward unity which marks the period represents very different stages of progress. Some have only reached the stage of vague or tentative exploration. Others have gone as far as definite negotiations regarding terms and conditions of union. Still others, having come to the point of formal decision, have suffered indefinite postponement, as is the case with the Church of Scotland and the Church of England. Some have even had to be abandoned. A somewhat larger number has been consummated. It is a matter for great satisfaction to be able to record that all unions which have been in existence long enough to be tested have been distinctly successful in the eyes of those primarily concerned.

The schemes attempted illustrate all the usual meanings of the word unity. Some schemes have sought and some have secured mutual recognition between churches, and thus have laid the basis for intercommunion. As an example of the agreement to establish full communion we may quote the discussions between the Anglican communion and Old Catholic churches. Fruitful negotiations of a similar kind have been initiated between the Anglican communion and the churches of Finland, Latvia and Esthonia. Other churches have been content with more or less complete federation. About three-

quarters of all the cases recorded, however, have contemplated the actual corporate union of two or more previously separate bodies. This is exemplified in such conspicuous instances as the reunion of the Scottish Presbyterian churches in 1929 and that of the English Methodists in 1932, the union of the churches of Canada in 1925, the coming together of certain churches in northern and in southern India, the formation of the church of Christ in China in 1927 combining Baptist, Congregational, Methodist, Presbyterian and Reformed churches, United Brethren, the United Church of Canada and independent Chinese churches of six English-speaking nations. There are to be borne in mind also the contemplated unions of the French Reformed churches and of the chief Methodist churches of the United States. All these cases significantly change former ecclesiastical structure and constitute single churches where several existed before.

Many of the great denominational types of churches represented in the Faith and Order movement have been involved in these recent developments. Some have been primarily interested in the realization of a particular form or kind of unity. Others have limited themselves to the uniting of bodies of the same religious type and tradition. But highly significant unions in the United States, Canada and China have brought into single communions churches of very divergent traditions and polity; so that the record of the immediate past does not suggest any necessity for waiting upon unions of denominational families before wider union is attempted.

Obviously any estimate of the very varied forms of mutual approach depends upon the kind of unity one believes to be important and on the true objective. Schemes of a denominational kind might in some cases prove in a few years' time to have strengthened confessional consciousness and so to have postponed ecumenical union by widening the gulfs between the large churches thus created. Some may see in most of the recent movements only minor cases mainly remedying, on a local or regional scale, certain practical disadvantages of disunion. Intercommunion has not been widely extended during the decade; and no union has been consummated between a church of radically "catholic" tradition and one of radically "evangelical" tradition. While, then, the significance of the progress made must not be overstated, the trend toward unity

is nevertheless marked both in magnitude and in character. It is widespread throughout the world. It occurs in a wide variety of forms. It is vital, relevant to actual situations. It is making increasing appeal to the heart and conscience of all Christian men.

THE REPORTS OF THE SECTIONS

I. THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST *

With deep thankfulness to God for the spirit of unity, which by his gracious blessing upon us has guided and controlled all our discussions, *we agree on the following statement and recognize that there is in connection with the subject committed to our section no ground for maintaining division between churches.*

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The Meaning of Grace

When we speak of God's grace, we think of God himself as revealed in his Son Jesus Christ. The meaning of divine grace is truly known only to those who know that God is love, and that all that he does is done in love in fulfillment of his righteous purposes. His grace is manifested in our creation and preservation and in all the blessings of this life, but above all in our redemption through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, in the sending of the holy and life-giving Spirit, in the fellowship of the church and in the gift of the Word and sacraments.

Man's salvation and welfare have their source in God alone, who is moved to his gracious activity toward man not by any merit on man's part, but solely by his free, outgoing love.

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Justification and Sanctification

Faith is more than intellectual acceptance of the revelation in Jesus Christ; it is wholehearted trust in God and his promises and committal of ourselves to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

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* Statements of agreement are italicized.

The Sovereignty of God and Man's Response

In regard to the relation of God's grace and man's freedom, we all agree simply on the basis of Holy Scripture and Christian experience that the sovereignty of God is supreme. By the sovereignty of God we mean his all-controlling, all-embracing will and purpose revealed in Jesus Christ for each man and for all mankind. And we wish further to insist that this eternal purpose is the expression of God's own loving and holy nature. Thus we men owe our whole salvation to his gracious will. But, on the other hand, it is the will of God that his grace should be actively appropriated by man's own will and that for such decision man should remain responsible.

Many theologians have made attempts on philosophical lines to reconcile the apparent antithesis of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, but such theories are not part of the Christian faith.

We are glad to report that in this difficult matter we have been able to speak with a united voice, so that we have found that here there ought to be no ground for maintaining any division between churches.

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The Church and Grace

We agree that the church is the body of Christ and the blessed company of all faithful people, whether in heaven or on earth, the communion of saints.

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Grace, the Word, and the Sacraments

We agree that the Word and the sacraments are gifts of God to the church through Jesus Christ for the salvation of mankind. In both the grace of God in Christ is shown forth, given, and through faith received; and this grace is one and indivisible.

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Among or within the churches represented by us there is a certain difference of emphasis placed upon the Word and the sacraments, but *we agree that such a difference need not be a barrier to union.*

Sola Gratia (By Grace Alone)

The phrase, "*sola gratia,*" has been the subject of much controversy. Some churches set great value on the phrase while others avoid it, but *we can all join in the following statement:* Our salvation is the gift of God and the fruit of his grace. It is not based on the merit of man, but has its root and foundation in the forgiveness which God in his grace grants to the sinner whom he receives to sanctify him. We do not, however, hold that the action of the divine grace overrides human freedom and responsibility; rather, it is only as response is made by faith to divine grace that true freedom is achieved. Resistance to the appeal of God's outgoing love spells not freedom, but bondage, and perfect freedom is found only in complete conformity with the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

II. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AND THE WORD OF GOD

The Word of God

We concur in affirming that the Word of God is ever living and dynamic and inseparable from God's activity. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." God reveals himself to us by what he does, by that activity by which he has wrought the salvation of men and is working for their restoration to personal fellowship with himself.

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We are at one in asserting the uniqueness and supremacy of the revelation given in Christ, the second person of the Holy Trinity; in his name alone salvation is offered to the world. But when we turn from this to the question whether we can come to know God through other and partial revelations we find differences which demand further study and discussion. None of us holds that there is a revelation *outside* Christ which can be put on the same level as the revelation *in* Christ. But while many are prepared to recognize a *praeparatio evangelica* not only in Hebrew but also in other religions, and believe that God makes himself known in nature and in history, others hold that the only revelation which the church

can know and to which it should witness is the revelation in Jesus Christ as contained in both the Old and New Testaments.

Holy Scripture and Tradition

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We are at one in recognizing that the church, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, has been instrumental in the formation of the Bible.

But some of us hold that this implies that the church under the guidance of the Spirit is entrusted with the authority to explain, interpret and complete the teaching of the Bible, and consider the witness of the church as given in tradition as equally authoritative with the Bible itself. Others, however, believe that the church, having recognized the Bible as the indispensable record of the revealed Word of God, is bound exclusively by the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice and, while accepting the relative authority of tradition, would consider it authoritative only in so far as it is founded upon the Bible itself.

We all agree that the Christian church is constituted by the eternal Word of God made man in Christ and is always vitalized by his Holy Spirit. On the other hand, the divine task given to the church is to proclaim and bear witness to this Word throughout the world by its preaching, its worship and its whole life.

The Church: Our Common Faith

We are at one in confessing belief in the Holy Catholic Church. We acknowledge that through Jesus Christ, particularly through the fact of his resurrection, of the gathering of his disciples round their crucified, risen and victorious Lord, and of the coming of the Holy Ghost, God's almighty will constituted the church on earth.

The church is the people of the new covenant, fulfilling and transcending all that Israel under the old covenant foreshadowed. It is the household of God, the family in which the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man are to be realized in the children of his adoption. It is the body of Christ, whose members derive their life and oneness from their one living Head; and thus it is nothing apart from him, but

is in all things dependent upon the power of salvation which God has committed to his Son.

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Even though men often prove faithless, Christ will remain faithful to the promise of his presence, and will so continue till the consummation of all things.

In their apprehension of this faith different persons lay a different emphasis on one or another aspect. Some lay greater stress on the perpetual and abiding presence of Christ in his body and with his people, while others lay greater stress on the fact that Christ is present only where his word is truly preached and received by faith.

A point to be studied is in what degree the Christian ultimately depends for his assurance that he is in vital touch with Christ upon the possession of the ministry and sacraments, upon the Word of God in the church, upon the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit, or upon all of these.

The Church: Agreements and Differences

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Different churches differ in their use of the term "church." Some would apply the term not only to the visible redeemed and redemptive community, but also to the invisible company of the fully redeemed; for only when the word is used in this sense would it be right to say, "*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*" — outside the church there is no salvation. But the invisible church is no ideal platonic community distinct from the visible church on earth. The invisible church and the visible church are inseparably connected though their limits are not exactly coterminous. Others regard the use of the term "church," with reference to this invisible company of true Christians known only to God, as misleading and unscriptural. To speak of this invisible body as the true church conveys the disastrous suggestions that the true church need not be visible and that the visible church need not be true. We all, however, recognize that the number of those whom God has brought into newness of life and joy in the Holy Ghost, and who have made personal response to the forgiving love of God, has limits hidden from human vision and known only to God.

Different churches hold different views as to the basis of church membership. Some would hold that all who have been baptized and have not by deed or word repudiated their heritage belong to the church and are to be regarded as members. Others would confine membership to those who have made an open profession of faith in Christ and in whose lives some measure of the spirit of Christ may be discerned.

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The Church and the Kingdom

The gospel of Jesus Christ bears witness to the reality both of the church and of the kingdom of God.

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Agreeing in this faith we are not yet of one mind about (*a*) the relationship of the church to the kingdom, and (*b*) the extent to which the kingdom is made known here and now.

Some stress the kinship between the church and the kingdom, others the distinction between them. Some lay emphasis on the actual presence of the kingdom within the church and the continuity of the two, holding that the coming of the kingdom can be seen in the progress of the church in this world and the work wrought through believers, or even through all men of good will the world over. Others lay emphasis on the kingdom that is to come in glory; and others again think of the kingdom as the ever increasing reign of the righteousness and the love of God as manifested in Jesus Christ in every realm of life.

Again, some hold that the progress of the kingdom can already be seen in this world; others hold that the church knows the kingdom by faith only, since the victory of Christ is still hidden from the world and is destined to remain hidden until the end of this age.

In some churches these differing conceptions are felt to be of great moment and act as a barrier to full intercourse, while in others they form no such obstacle but are held side by side without interfering with complete communion.

The Function of the Church

The function of the church is to glorify God in adoration and sacrificial service and to be God's missionary to the world.

She is to bear witness to God's redeeming grace in Jesus Christ in her corporate life, to proclaim the good news to every creature and to make disciples of all nations, bringing Christ's commandments to communities as well as to individuals.

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The church must proclaim the righteousness of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and thus encourage and guide her members to promote justice, peace and good will among all men and through the whole extent of life. The church is thus called to do battle against the powers of evil and to seek the glory of God in all things, looking to the day when his kingdom shall come in the fullness of its power.

The Gift of Prophecy and the Ministry of the Word

We are agreed that the presence and inspiration of the Holy Spirit are granted to his chosen instruments today, and especially to those called to be ministers of the word of God. Not only in the corporate life and the teaching of the church as a whole, but in each of its members according to his ability and calling, the Holy Spirit has come to dwell. Indeed all perfect and abiding revelation given to us in Christ our Lord would certainly have perished from the world had there been no inspired men to record it and to preach it in every age. This revelation does not belong only to the past; it is also an ever present word by which God speaks directly to the listening soul.

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Una Sancta and Our Divisions

Everything which the New Testament teaches concerning the church presupposes its essential unity. But we, as we confess our faith in the one church, are conscious of a profound cleavage between that faith and the conditions of the present time.

We acknowledge that all who accept Jesus Christ as Son of God and their Lord and Saviour, and realize their dependence upon God's mercy revealed in him, have in that fact a supernatural bond of oneness which subsists in spite of divergences in defining the divine mystery of the Lord. We rejoice that this sense of kinship is now drawing Christians nearer to one

another, and that in many partial ways a foretaste of full fellowship between severed communions is even now being sought and found.

But we believe that the divisions of Christendom in every land are such as to hamper the manifestation of the unity of Christ's body. We deplore this with all our hearts; and we desire that this conference should summon members of the churches to such penitence that not only their leaders, but the ordinary men and women who hear their message, may learn that the cause of Christian unity is implicit in God's word, and should be treated by the Christian conscience as an urgent call from God.

The Communion of Saints

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Any conception of the communion of saints which is confined to the church on earth alone is defective. Many see in the communion of saints an affirmation of the unbroken communion between the living and departed in Christ. They believe themselves to be in communion with the departed and express this in their worship. They rejoice to think that there is a growing consciousness among Christians of the nearness to the redeemed of the unseen world, refusing to believe that death severs the communion of those on earth with those departed.

For some it is sufficient to leave their departed ones with God, being linked with them through Christ. Others regard it as a Christian privilege and duty to pray for the departed. Still others, conscious of the living presence, guardianship, and help of the saints, ask their prayers before God.

We all agree that we ought to remember with thankfulness those who as followers of Christ witnessed a good confession in their day and generation, thereby winning victories for Christ and his kingdom.

We wish to make it clear that " the communion which the saints have with Christ does not make them in any wise partakers of the substance of his Godhead, or to be equal with Christ in any respect." In no circumstances should the cherishing of this doctrine veil or shadow the sufficient and only mediatorship of Jesus Christ as our Lord and Redeemer. Nei-

ther must this honoring of the saints descend to superstition or abuse.

A right understanding of the doctrine of the communion of saints will help us to realize more vividly that we are in this life members one of another and that " we are come into Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant." *(Heb. 12: 22–24.)*

III. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST — MINISTRY AND SACRAMENTS

The Authority for the Sacraments

We are agreed that in all sacramental doctrine and practice the supreme authority is our Lord Jesus Christ himself.

All the churches have based their sacramental doctrine and order upon their belief that, according to the evidence of the New Testament, the sacraments which they accept were instituted by Christ himself. *We are agreed that baptism and the Lord's Supper occupied from the beginning a central position in the church's common life, and take their origin from what was said and done by Jesus during his life on earth.* Sacramental teaching and practice, therefore, are rightly founded upon the record of the New Testament.

The sacraments are Christ's gifts to his church, which is not a static society but a living and growing organism and communion, guided by the Holy Spirit into all truth.

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The Number of the Sacraments

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Most of us agree that the question of the number of the sacraments should not be regarded as an insurmountable dividing line when we strive to attain to a united church. The divergence between the practice of the Society of Friends and that of other churches admittedly presents serious difficulties, but we trust that even here the Holy Spirit will show us his will.

Validity

We agree that the sacraments practiced by any Christian church which believes itself to be observing what Christ appointed for his church are means of grace to those who partake of them with faith.

Confusion has sometimes been introduced by the use of the term "valid" in the following senses: (*a*) It is sometimes used synonymously with "efficacious," so that the term "invalid" would imply that a sacrament has no spiritual value and is not a means of grace. (*b*) It is sometimes used to imply that the sacrament has been correctly performed.

In so far as Christians find themselves obliged by loyalty to Christ and to his church to judge that the sacraments practiced by other Christians are invalid, or doubtfully valid, they should, in the cause of Christian truth and charity, do all in their power to see that the precise meaning of their judgment, and the grounds on which they are obliged to make it, are clearly understood.

Many of us are of the opinion, and desire to record our belief, that although it is the duty of a church to secure that sacraments should be performed regularly and canonically, yet no judgment should be pronounced by any church denying the "validity" of the sacraments performed by any Christian church which believes itself to be observing what Christ appointed for his church.

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We believe that every sacrament should be so ordered that all may recognize in it an act performed on behalf of the universal church.

To this end there is need of an ordained ministry recognized by all to act on behalf of the universal church in the administration of the sacraments.

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Baptism

The reunited church will observe the rule that all members of the visible church are admitted by baptism, which is a gift of God's redeeming love to the church, and, administered in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is a sign

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and seal of Christian discipleship in obedience to our Lord's command.

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A note appended by the Baptist delegates is as follows: As regards the above statement which has been passed by their brethren who practice infant baptism, the Baptists of this section could accept it as applying to the baptism of believers, i.e., of those who are capable of making a personal confession of faith. In practicing the baptism of believers only, they hold that they are maintaining the practice of baptism as it is found in the New Testament and in the apostolic church, and also the principle which is laid down on page 27 of the report of Commission III to this effect, viz.: " The necessary condition of receiving the grace of a sacrament is the faith of the recipient." They believe that children belong to God and that no rite is needed to assure his grace for them. This statement of the Baptists was accepted also by a representative of the Disciples of Christ on behalf of that body.

The Eucharist

We all believe that Christ is truly present in the eucharist, though we may differ as to how that presence is manifested and realized.

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We believe if sacrifice is understood, as it was by our Lord and his followers and in the early church, it includes not his death only, but the obedience of his earthly ministry and his risen and ascended life, which is still a life of obedience and of service, as it is of intercession for us. Such a sacrifice can never be repeated, but is proclaimed and set forth in the eucharistic action of the whole church when we come to God in Christ at the eucharist or Lord's Supper. For us the secret of joining in that sacrifice is both the worship and the service of God; corporate, because we are joined to Christ and in him to each other (*I Cor. 10:17*) ; individual, because each one of us makes the corporate act of self-oblation his own; and not ceremonial only, but also profoundly ethical, because the keynote of all sacrifice and offering is " Lo! I come to do thy will, O God. " We believe also that the eucharist is a supreme moment of

prayer, because the Lord is the celebrant or minister for us at every celebration and it is in his prayers for God's gifts and for us all that we join. And, as in the New Testament accounts of the institution, his prayer is itself a giving of thanks; so that the Lord's Supper is both a *verbum visibile* of the divine grace and the supreme thanksgiving *eucharistia* of the people of God. We are throughout in the realm of spirit. It is through the Holy Spirit that the blessing and the gift are given. The Presence, which we do not try to define, is a spiritual presence. We begin from the historical fact of the incarnation in the power of the Holy Spirit, and we are already moving forward to the complete spiritual reality of the coming of the Lord and the life of the heavenly city.

Ministry

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(a) *The ministry was instituted by Jesus Christ, the Head of the church, "for the perfecting of the saints, . . . the upbuilding of the body of Christ," and is a gift of God to the church in the service of the word and sacraments.*

This ministry does not exclude but presupposes the "royal priesthood" to which all Christians are called as the redeemed of Jesus Christ.

Ordination to the ministry, according to New Testament teaching and the historic practice of the church, is by prayer and the laying on of hands.

It is essential to a united church that it should have a ministry universally recognized.

(b) In a united church the historic episcopate should be interpreted as including bishops, presbyters and deacons, without insistence upon any one dogmatic determination of doctrine concerning the ministry. The intimate association of the presbyters in council with the bishop, and of the laity with both, in the government of the church — which had lapsed, especially in the Western church, in the Middle Ages but was revived through the Reformation in varying forms — should be conserved.

In the united church of the future no episcopate would be recognized that was not both constitutional and representative of the whole church — constitutional in the exercise of author-

ity in its association with the presbyters in council, and representative in effective association with the ministry and the laity in the councils or synods of the church.

The apostolic succession has been and is understood in various ways. It has been thought of as the succession of bishops in the principle sees of Christendom, handing down and preserving the apostles' doctrine. In addition to this succession in office there has been a succession of bishops by laying on of hands.

From early times this double succession has been associated with the stewardship of the sacraments, and is regarded by certain churches as constituting the true and only guarantee of sacramental grace and right doctrine. Others cherish the same values manifested in a succession of ordinations by presbyteries duly constituted and exercising episcopal functions, and in the succession of presbyters in charge of parishes, with special emphasis on the true preaching of the word and the right administration of the sacraments. Others consider the succession to mean the transmission from generation to generation of the authority of ministerial oversight over both clergy and laity in the church, and they regard it as both a symbol and a bond of unity. Others interpret apostolic succession as meaning essentially, or even exclusively, the maintenance of the apostles' witness through the true preaching of the gospel, the right administration of the sacraments and the perpetuation of the Christian life in the Christian community. In every case churches treasure the apostolic succession in which they believe.

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(c) Comprehensive union must involve the fullest mutual recognition, each church humbly acknowledging that there are gifts belonging to others which would be of benefit to the whole church.

If the ministry of the united church should sufficiently include characteristic elements from the episcopal, presbyterial and congregational systems, the present adherents of those systems would have mutually recognized one another's places in the church of God, all would be able to find a spiritual home in the united church, and the doctrine of the apostolic succession would, upon a common basis of faith, attain the fullness which

belongs to it by comprehending at once the word, the ministry and the sacraments, and the life of the Christian community.

We are alike called of God to pray and to labor by every means for the promotion of this common aim, recognizing that the future or ultimate form to be assumed by the united church must depend not only on the experience of the past, but above all upon the continued direction of the Holy Spirit.

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IV. THE CHURCH'S UNITY IN LIFE AND WORSHIP

The unity of which we are in search is not simple but complex. It has two aspects: (*a*) the inner spiritual unity known in its completeness to God alone; and (*b*) the outward unity which expresses itself in mutual recognition, cooperative action and corporate or institutional unity. In view of our instructions we have confined ourselves to bringing forward concrete proposals mentioned by different members of the section. These may be regarded as next steps, some of which are of concern to individual communions, others of concern to groups of communions in certain countries or other areas, and still others may be considered as of ecumenical or world-wide range.

Need of Wider Knowledge

In view of the admitted fact that a principal hindrance to Christian and church unity is the widely prevailing ignorance, apathy and inertia on the whole subject of unity, we earnestly advocate the launching and conducting in various communions of an adequate educational ecumenical program. To this end simple, and also more elaborate, outlines of study of interesting and relevant aspects of the Christian union movement should be prepared and introduced.

Existing books on the principles of the world-wide Christian movement, now commonly called "ecumenism," though valuable, are as a rule too technical for general use. So much depends on a widespread understanding of this subject that special material should be produced for the general church membership. For instance, a series of small volumes about the various communions, giving the facts which are most distinctive, significant and of living interest, would meet a very real need in many countries. There is a place, moreover, for

carefully planned articles in the more influential magazines. Current ecumenical developments must also receive more systematic attention in both the religious and the secular press. It is at this point — the failure to educate the rank and file of the lay membership, both men and women — that so many cooperative and union schemes break down or fail to advance.

In this connection we warmly approve the proposal, already discussed in several quarters, that an authoritative, Christian, ecumenical review should be undertaken, preferably under the auspices of such ecumenical church organization as may follow the Oxford and Edinburgh conferences.

Theological Education

The theological colleges or seminaries of each communion should make provision in the curriculum for instruction of the future ministry in all that pertains to the drawing together of the various Christian communions, with special reference to the more significant developments and plans of present-day ecumenical movements. The chairs dealing with doctrine should include instruction in the doctrines, not only of the church to which each institution belongs, but also of other communions. Chairs of church history, liturgics and missions should deal with the history and work of all branches of Christendom. In certain centers this can be achieved by joint action on the part of several colleges. Moreover, in addition to instruction through lectures and seminar work, intervisitation on the part of students of the colleges of different communions should be encouraged. The valuable work of the Ecumenical Seminar in Geneva will be found suggestive, as also the activities of the Student Christian movements in the theological colleges and seminaries.

Education of the Young

The spreading of the spirit of Christian ecumenical fellowship needs not only the conscious communication of knowledge and ideas, but the fostering of such attitudes and spiritual experience as will lead to the desire for unity. While this is true of old and young alike, it is peculiarly desirable that in the processes of Christian education this principle should be borne in mind.

Research Groups

The plan followed in Holland, France, Victoria (Australia), and also in other countries, of forming societies of theologians and other scholars for more profound study and research in the problems of ecumenism might well be followed in other countries, possibly through the agency of existing institutions.

A Day of Prayer

The practice in some countries — for example, Norway — of setting apart one Sunday each year for special prayer for the ecumenical movement is worthy of wide observance. Moreover, we draw attention to the suggestion of Pastor Wilfred Monod, endorsed by many others, that when the holy communion is celebrated the officiating minister should use words in prayer or in preaching which will help worshipers to identify themselves with the whole Christian fellowship in the act of communion.

Mutual Church Aid

The practice of the early Christian church, which is being followed so helpfully today by the European Central Office for Inter-Church Aid,* the Russian Church Aid Fund, and by certain individual communions, of affording mutual help to suffering or weaker churches of other communions, is not only an expression of the spirit of Christ but also an invaluable means of fostering ecumenical education and fellowship.

Spiritual Preparation

A precursor to many very significant church union movements has been prolonged and pronouncedly spiritual preparation, including united movements for prayer and joint participation in such Christian tasks as evangelism and meeting great moral and social needs. Of this there are conspicuous

* The Central Office for Inter-Church Aid is a relief organization on an interdenominational basis, organized by the Bethesda Conference at Copenhagen, 1922, composed of seventy officially appointed church representatives from Europe and America. This office gave help to suffering evangelical churches of various denominations in sixteen countries as well as to Orthodox, Old Catholic, Armenian and Nestorian Assyrian churches.

examples in India, China, Japan and Korea, as well as in the West. The recent united Preaching Mission in a score or more of the leading cities of America, and other united evangelistic campaigns, not only afford convincing demonstrations of unity but also have been the means of generating the spirit of unity and creating a temper which finds the continuance of division intolerable.

Principles of Cooperation

It is widely recognized that sound policies of cooperation in all spheres of Christian action have done much to facilitate the drawing together of the Christian churches. Such cooperation between Christian bodies, if it is to be truly effective, must have regard to certain guiding principles and governing considerations drawn from experience already accumulated in many countries.

Among these attention is called to the following:

(1) In determining the sphere of cooperation due regard is paid to the objects to be achieved, namely:
   (*a*) to meet real and recognized need;
   (*b*) to obviate conflict and unnecessary waste;
   (*c*) to accomplish important results which cannot be secured as well, if at all, by the cooperative agencies working separately.
(2) At the very beginning of the undertaking the various bodies joining in the cooperative arrangement enter into an understanding as to objectives, scope, direction, assignment of responsibilities, support and all else vital to the success of the undertaking, and this understanding is set forth with clarity in writing.
(3) The cooperative agency possesses only such power as the cooperating bodies confer upon it.
(4) The plan of organization is made as simple as is compatible with achieving the desired results.
(5) Everything is done openly and in consultation.
(6) There is a sincere determination to understand the viewpoints and the distinctive characteristics of the different units, and willingness to accept what others have to give.

(7) Wherever cooperation is undertaken it is carried through so thoroughly as to create the confidence on which further developments must depend.

(8) No large venture of cooperation can proceed to high success without adequate financial resources, but it is believed that those will be forthcoming if the other conditions here emphasized are met.

(9) The leaders are on their guard lest in their own lives there be manifested or tolerated those things which tend to destroy cooperation or to make impossible true Christian unity; for example, ignorance and prejudice, hazy thinking and vague statements, selfish ambition and jealousy, suspicion and lack of frankness, intrigue and disloyalty.

(10) The prime consideration to be borne constantly in mind by all engaged in the work of cooperation is that of rendering Christlike service. First and last in point of importance is the recognition of the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and the conviction that he himself wills cooperation and unity.

Fellowships of Unity

Springing up in different parts of the world are fellowships of unity which are exerting an influence out of all proportion to their number. The Association of Unity inaugurated by the late Peter Ainslie is an illustration. Other examples are the Friends of Reunion in Great Britain, the Anglican and Eastern Church Association, and the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius. Still another is the Fellowship of Unity in Egypt. This fellowship holds each year great united meetings of members of several communions, Eastern and Western, provides lectures on various aspects of the religious life and practices of the churches, furnishes articles for the press dealing with ecumenical questions, and arranges for parties to visit different churches at special times and seasons for the study of different forms of worship. The churches have hardly begun to explore the possibilities of realizing a more vital understanding and a deeper unity through acquaintance with one another's modes and experiences of worship.

Regional Conferences

We believe the time has come when in our various countries there should be held regional conferences similar to those held at Oxford and Edinburgh. In certain of the larger countries there might well be held in different areas a series of more intimate consultations, or retreats, of church leaders, or other specialized groups.

Youth Movements

A most reassuring feature of the ecumenical movement is the growing keen interest in the subject being manifested by the Student Christian movements and other Christian youth organizations. This interest should be fostered in every possible way. We commend heartily the World Christian Youth Conference planned for the year 1939 [at Amsterdam].

Increase of Intercourse

We draw attention to the multiplying examples of exchange of membership, of interchange of pulpits, and of intercommunion on the part of the different churches in all parts of the world, and, subject to proper understanding and regulation, believe that these practices should be encouraged.

Where occasional communion is admitted in the practice of a church but is not formally recognized by its law, it is desirable that, where principles permit, this apparent incongruity should be removed as soon as possible in order to avoid misunderstanding, both on the part of the recipient and of members of the communion extending the invitation. Where hesitancy still remains because of this ambiguity, or for any reason, the communicants of one church, whether ministers or laymen, should be encouraged to be present at the sacraments of other churches. And such presence should be regarded as an act of common worship expressing the measure of spiritual unity already attained.

We feel moved to say in this connection that to press for intercommunion with those whose consciences forbid it, or to show impatience with those whose loyalties hold them back from that which many of us greatly desire, is an offense against Christian charity and a disservice to the cause of unity. On

the other hand, the refusal of intercommunion is tolerable only when it is accompanied by evident expressions of heartfelt sorrow on the part of those who find themselves bound to withhold it.

Plans for Church Union

It is recommended that communions represented at the present conference consider the desirability of setting up effective standing commissions for the study of the ecumenical questions, for fostering mutually helpful relations with other communions and for conducting conversations with other communions leading toward church union.

It is highly desirable, in countries where conditions are favorable and the time seems ripe, that those communions which already enjoy a considerable measure of mutual understanding, fellowship and cooperation should proceed without undue delay to the stage of official negotiations, or at least of conversations, and in particular should produce, as soon as may be, a preliminary or provisional draft scheme of union for submission to their constituencies.

Needs of Special Areas

In certain regions circumstances make a special demand on the churches for cooperative action. One type of problem is presented by areas where there has been a sudden marked increase in population, or where there have been created entirely new communities through the operation of rehousing schemes. This situation calls for united action on the part of different churches, and the absence of such action is likely to lead to bitterness, strife and wasted effort. To deal with such situations it is suggested that the churches, where their principles permit, should set up permanent comity or international commissions to review, recommend and guide the location of new churches. Such a plan will avoid the danger of congregations being created which have a local unity, but are cut off from the contacts and resources afforded by membership in a wider communion. Similar action may be possible in the numerous centers where, owing to a decrease of population, more churches exist than the populations need or can support. There are other problems presented in other areas which are susceptible of similar treatment.

Territorial and Ecumenical Unity

A problem calling for farsighted policy is that presented in areas where, when union is under discussion, it becomes necessary for a church to choose between entering into a unity with other denominations within the same national boundary, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, maintaining connections with other churches of its own order throughout the world. Experience shows that the injury done to the Christian cause by the multiplicity of separate churches within a given area is so great that the territorial unity of churches should normally be regarded as desirable where it can be accomplished without violating the principles of the churches concerned. It must, however, be recognized that the ideal of a territorially or nationally united church is accompanied by certain dangers. Therefore we urge that in developing church union on the territorial basis every care be taken to preserve in nationally constituted churches a sense of ecumenical relationship, and to maintain such relationship in every possible way. For example, the United Church of Canada not only has united three communions into one united church, but also maintains affiliations with the ecumenical bodies to which the three uniting communions belonged.

The Older and Younger Churches

The churches and mission boards of the West have a great responsibility to discharge in regard to union movements among the younger churches. Even where the younger churches are autonomous, they will naturally seek counsel and encouragement from the older churches to which under God they owe their origin. While it is right and proper for the older churches to place at the disposal of younger churches what they most value in doctrine, worship and order, it must be recognized as a fundamental necessity that in all matters the younger churches, as well as the older churches, should be free to follow the leading of the Spirit of God as it is apprehended by them.

The conference has heard, with deep appreciation, of movements toward church union in many parts of the world. It regards the scheme for church union in South India, about

which three churches are now negotiating, as deserving of particular attention and study, because in it an attempt is being made to include within a united church communions holding to the episcopal, the presbyterial and the congregational principles. The importance of prayerful study of this scheme is further shown by the fact that union negotiations based on its principles are in progress in other parts of the world. In dealing with this and with similar cases the churches of East and West alike may be called upon for great acts of trust.

The World Council of Churches

If the churches adopt the proposal to form a World Council of Churches which has been approved in principle by this conference as well as by the conference held at Oxford, we think it should be so designed as to conserve the distinctive character and values of each of the movements represented in the two conferences. To this end it is essential that, while freedom should be exercised in the formation of special committees, the churches as such should come together on the basis of the doctrine of the incarnation. The largest success of the plan depends upon efficient representative national bodies, as these will insure adequate representation of every communion.*

Because of the tragedy of the contemporary situation it was felt that some word should go forth from Edinburgh regarding the victims of the wars in progress in both East and West. The following declaration of sympathy was approved by the conference:

We have met at a time of great strain and distress alike in Europe and in the Far East. We watch with sympathy and sorrow the menace and horrors of war. We are persuaded that war never occurs except as a result and expression of that sin to redeem which Christ came into the world.

We therefore call all men, and ourselves before all others, to penitence and to prayer, that God may give to us and all men love of justice, the readiness to forgive, a knowledge of his will,

* So important is the whole question of this world Council of Churches that we shall consider it in detail in the final chapter. (Author's note.)

and the courage to obey it. For all who bear rule in their nations we ask the attendant bestowal of these gifts, and we pray that despite all earthly causes of estrangement Christians in all lands may be united in the fellowship of prayer and obedience.

In submitting this declaration Dr. Temple said that one ground for it was the fact that among the members of our conference were some whose dear ones in these lands were exposed to the horrors of war.

After the long process of receiving, amending, expanding, and accepting for transmission to the churches the reports of the sections, the conference moved to its close with a steadiness and conviction which all felt as a stimulus to deep spiritual commitment. There was no dwindling of attendance; almost without exception the delegates remained to the end. The closing session in the Assembly Hall, where the Affirmation of Unity was presented, seemed to surge into a solemn movement of unity — inspiring, tremendous, indescribable, an experience entirely and convincingly real.

In presenting the Affirmation of Unity, the Reverend Dr. Robert A. Ashworth, of the Northern Baptist Convention of the United States, a native of Glasgow, who was chairman of the committee which drafted the statement, said:

Those who were present at Lausanne will remember that there was adopted there what was called a "call to unity." That was a portion of the address by Bishop Brent at the beginning of the conference, and at the request of the conference it was somewhat enlarged, and was sent forth as the expression of the conference itself.

In the preparation of the program for this conference the program committee provided for the preparation of an "affirmation of unity," and it must have been somewhat of a venture of faith on the part of the committee to provide for such a

statement before the conference assembled. It is, of course, quite an advance over a mere call to unity such as was sent forth by the conference at Lausanne, and yet I think we all feel that the results of our deliberations together here have revealed a growth in unity of spirit, and have disclosed a real existing unity below all our divisions.

So this statement that has been prepared for your consideration tries to set forth that sense of unity that does underlie our differences as they have been discussed at this conference.

It is proposed that this statement be given a very wide circulation through the public press. It is addressed to the churches that sent us here, and to the world at large.

The committee that has prepared this statement, I think, is a truly representative committee — a kind of cross section of the conference, composed of nine delegates, representing nine different communions, coming from eight different countries, and speaking seven different native languages.

When we first got together one might reasonably have doubted whether such a committee as that could have got out any sort of common statement on any subject. If the question had been one of politics, I know we might have disagreed quite violently. If it had been a question of economics, we should not have been able to make a common statement. If the question had been one of theology, there might have been some slight differences of opinion on that subject. I am happy to say, however, that there was no outstanding difference — none whatsoever. This report comes to you as the unanimous recommendation of your committee.

Dr. Ashworth concluded by explaining that a number of suggestions had been made, and these had been considered at a session that morning. Every one of them had been taken into account in redrafting the statement.

What many regarded as the most impressive moment of the conference was reached when, after a full discussion in which several amendments were made, the Affirmation of Unity was passed. The Archbishop of York declared that acceptance of the statement should be " a very solemn and deliberate act," and then read the concluding sentence:

"We pray that everywhere in a world divided and perplexed men may turn to Jesus Christ our Lord, who makes us one in spite of our divisions, that he may bind in one those who by many worldly claims are set at variance; and that the world may at last find peace and unity in him, to whom be glory forever."

The delegates stood in silence for a few moments to signify their wholehearted approval, and prolonged applause greeted the archbishop's announcement that the affirmation had been passed with the support of every member of the conference. Particular interest attaches to the fact that the Roman Catholic observer of the proceedings stood with the rest, in token, obviously, of his feeling that this affirmation was so Christian as to be at least catholic — with a small "c"!

The only other business at the morning session was the final adoption of the full report of the conference. A redrafted part of the report of Section V was submitted, and in the course of discussion of it the Right Reverend Dr. A. C. Headlam, bishop of Gloucester, said that the main fundamental difficulty which the conference had had to face was how to reconcile those who claim to have an authoritative ministry based on a historical apostolic succession to giving due consideration to the orders and sacraments of those who do not claim to stand in that succession. To many of them it was clear that a united church must have that historical ministry, but a great bar to its acceptance was the fact that it had been used to deny the spiritual values and validity of nonepiscopal ministries.

The Church of England, continued Dr. Headlam, had never made any judgment condemning the orders and sacraments of any other church — although it was true that individuals and groups had delivered such judgments. The Presbyterian Church always made certain that those

who ministered in it had proper presbyterial ordination, but it had not condemned the orders or sacraments of other bodies.

"Can we believe," he asked, "that Jesus Christ himself would refuse to be present at a good Presbyterian, Methodist or Congregational sacrament, because there were no episcopal orders, when those persons sincerely desired to fulfill his commands? I cannot believe that, nor can I believe that he has one grace to give to Episcopalians and another for non-Episcopalians."

There was a moment of more than a little significance when the venerable president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Dr. J. R. Sampey, asked for the floor. He began by saying that he had been disturbed at times during the discussions when it seemed to him that some formal conception of the church and of the sacraments was thrust between the individual soul and the Saviour. He felt sure that not only Baptists but all who understood the genius of Christianity would agree that essentially salvation did not come to man through the priesthood or the sacraments but only through the redeeming love of God mediated to man through his Son. He concluded with the statement that while in the past the members of his branch of the church had not taken part in the ecumenical movement, he firmly hoped and believed that in the future they would do so.

The final word on the reports and other messages of the conference was spoken by the Reverend Canon C. L. Broun, vice-provost and chancellor of St. Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh. He paid a tribute to the work of those who had labored over the drafting, saying — as others had said — that it was inspiring to witness the process by which practical unanimity had been reached on so many difficult points. He felt that the final statements expressed every-

thing that was essential in all the varied standpoints represented.

With that the entire report as redrafted and amended by the whole body of delegates was accepted for transmission to the churches amid wholehearted applause. Then the company of delegates and after them the visitors rose to go in procession through the streets to the High Kirk of St. Giles' for the concluding service of worship.

Because of its beauty and fitness as the closing of a great Christian council which is sure to go down in history as one of the significant milestones in the life of world Christianity, it seems meet to include here the whole of the service just as it took place under the leadership of the chairman.

ORDER OF SERVICE

The Call to Worship and the Reading of the Affirmation of Unity

We are one in faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God. We are one in allegiance to him as Head of the church, and as King of kings and Lord of lords. We are one in acknowledging that this allegiance takes precedence of any other allegiance that may make claims upon us.

This unity does not consist in the agreement of our minds or the consent of our wills. It is founded in Jesus Christ himself, who lived, died, and rose again to bring us to the Father, and who through the Holy Spirit dwells in his church. We are one because we are all the objects of the love and grace of God, and called by him to witness in all the world to his glorious gospel.

Our unity is of heart and spirit. We are divided in the outward forms of our life in Christ because we understand differently his will for his church. We believe, however, that a deeper understanding will lead us toward a united apprehension of the truth as it is in Jesus. We humbly acknowledge that our divisions are contrary to the will of Christ, and we pray God in his mercy to shorten the days of our separation and to guide us by his spirit into the fullness of unity.

We are thankful that during recent years we have been drawn together; prejudices have been overcome, misunderstandings removed, and real, if limited, progress has been made toward our goal of a common mind.

In this conference we may gratefully claim that the Spirit of God has made us willing to learn from one another, and has given us a fuller vision of the truth and enriched our spiritual experience. We have lifted up our hearts together in prayer; we have sung the same hymns; together we have read the same Holy Scriptures. We recognize in one another, across the barriers of our separation, a common Christian outlook and a common standard of values. We are therefore assured of a unity deeper than our divisions.

We are convinced that our unity of spirit and aim must be embodied in a way that will make it manifest to the world, though we do not yet clearly see what outward form it should take. We believe that every sincere attempt to cooperate in the concerns of the kingdom of God draws the severed communions together in increased mutual understanding and good will.

We call upon our fellow Christians of all communions to practice such cooperation; to consider patiently occasions of disunion that they may be overcome; to be ready to learn from those who differ from them; to seek to remove those obstacles to the furtherance of the gospel in the non-Christian world which arise from our divisions; and constantly to pray for that unity which we believe to be our Lord's will for his church.

We desire also to declare to all men everywhere our assurance that Christ is the one hope of unity for the world in face of the distractions and dissensions of this present time. We know that our witness is weakened by our divisions. Yet we are one in Christ and in the fellowship of his Spirit.

We pray that everywhere, in a world divided and perplexed, men may turn to Jesus Christ our Lord, who makes us one in spite of our divisions; that he may bind in one those who by many worldly claims are set at variance; and that the world may at last find peace and unity in him; to whom be glory forever.

An Act of Thanksgiving

Hymn – Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty

We give thanks to Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that we are one in our Lord Jesus Christ; not by the agreement of our minds or the consent of our wills, but by that which he, in his unmerited grace, has done for us in his incarnation, death and resurrection, and by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

We thank Thee, O God.

We give thanks that he has called us into his faith, and laid upon us an allegiance to himself that is above all other loyalties.

We thank Thee, O God.

We give thanks for the knowledge that though we are divided in outward form we all are the objects of the love and grace of God.

We thank Thee, O God.

We give thanks that we have been brought into a fellowship of thought and prayer; for all that we have learned in our fellowship; for prejudices overcome, misunderstandings removed, sympathies enlarged, insight deepened; and for all advance that has been made toward a common mind.

We pray that through patience and humility Christians of each several communion may be led to a deeper understanding of those truths of the gospel to which they have borne witness; into a wider understanding of those truths for which other communions have stood; and finally into an apprehension of the truth in its fullness, wherein all our partial apprehension shall be brought into unity.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We thank Thee, O God.

We give thanks for the joy that we have found in sharing the treasures of worship and devotion that we even now hold in common.

We thank Thee, O God.

We acknowledge that our understanding of the truth as it is in Jesus has been limited by our pride, willfulness and narrowness of mind, and that our witness to the world is weakened by our divisions.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

We therefore pray together to Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that he will forgive the sinfulness of our separation, and grant us true repentance and grace to amend our ways.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray that Christians everywhere may be led to seek diligently for ways of manifesting in outward and visible form the unity of heart and spirit which has been granted to us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray that all men everywhere, in a world distracted and divided, may turn to Christ, who makes us one in spite of our divisions; that he may bind in one those whom many worldly claims set at variance; and that the world may at last find peace and unity in him; to whom be glory forever.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Hymn — Now thank we all our God

Reading — John 15:1–12.

Then shall silence be kept for a space.

Closing Prayers — "O Christ, our only Saviour"
"O Lord, support us"

The Blessing.

As the last strains of music died away within the cathedral a silent and deeply moved company of men and women filed through the doors into the sunlit square surrounding the ancient church. I see them there now, gathered in friendly groups around a spot on the pavement marked by the outline of a heart — the "heart of Midlothian." Was it symbolic? One is at liberty to think so; for on that spot once stood an infamous prison in which the victims of the Scottish religious wars were incarcerated and on whose grim walls the head of more than one martyr was exposed to the public gaze. We live in a different era; and yet how solemn are the warnings that even in our own day persecution and death for faith are not things of the past only. May not that symbol have meant that the heart of Christ

is the uniting and unifying factor upon which alone we may rely for the strengthening of his church "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"?

VI

OXFORD AND EDINBURGH ACT

As I was about to begin writing this chapter a friend of mine, a physician, asked me whether I thought that what had been said and done at Oxford and Edinburgh would have any significant effect in the life of the world. It happened that, as I knew, he had just returned from a great meeting of medical men in Europe. Now the work of such a group differs greatly from that of a religious assembly; and yet, as I suggested to my friend, the answer to his question would involve many considerations in some measure parallel. To be effective in practical life the fruits of any discussion, no matter how expert or highly informed the participants, must first be given the stamp of general professional approval; then they must be incorporated in the education of aspirants to the profession and communicated to all its leading representatives; and thus sooner or later they will become integral to that branch of human activity in all the civilized world. Suppose, for example, that a positive cure for cancer were discovered. Would anyone in his senses expect the mortality from cancer to drop within a few weeks? The thoughtful man would realize that the new technique would have to pass by relatively slow stages into common practice. Great numbers of individuals would have to be convinced of its value and trained in its use. There would be the barriers of language, distance, finance, medical organization and administration to overcome. Moreover, without some generally recognized world organization to communicate with the

national medical associations and stimulate promotion of and education in the new technique there could be no rapid advance in the use of even so priceless a boon as a cure for cancer.

You see the application of this illustration, I am sure, without my laboring the point. Is it not a fair analogy? Curiously enough, when it comes to a matter like science or medicine everyone is prepared to admit the advantage — indeed the indispensableness — of effective world organization. Some sort of international link simply must exist, and no one supposes that the right kind will be forged by chance. Somewhere there must be a coordinating center which makes it a primary task to look to the establishment and effective use of channels of communication, if nothing more. But as concerns the religious sphere, it has often been assumed that all that is needed there is a vague, general good will — a kind of psychic realization of fellowship, a sentimental gesture now and then in the direction of the ideal unity. How unintelligent — and how futile!

Just because of the great desire for a unity more than sentimental which pervaded both Oxford and Edinburgh tremendous interest was shown in the measures proposed in the field of organization. And it is to that part of the story of the two conferences that we now turn.

You will recall references in the account of Oxford's deliberations to the debate over the proposed World Council of Churches. Because the same debate took place at Edinburgh and essentially the same action was taken, I indicated that the fuller account of what happened would be given here.

Just what was the proposal? The simplest answer to that question is to summarize the report made by the "Committee of Thirty-five," headed by Dr. William Temple, archbishop of York. First, however, let us glance at the

list of the members of that committee to see its remarkably representative character. Here it is:

Jonkvrouwe C. M. van Asch van Wijck, President, World's Young Women's Christian Association
The Rev. M. E. Aubrey, Moderator, Federal Council of Evangelical Free Churches, England and Wales
Bishop James C. Baker, Methodist Episcopal Church, San Francisco
Dr. Albert W. Beaven, President, Colgate-Rochester Seminary, New York
Pasteur Marc Boegner, President, French Federation of Protestant Churches
Dr. D. Y. Brilioth, Dean of Lund, Sweden
Professor William Adams Brown, Union Theological Seminary, New York
Professor Walter T. Brown, Victoria University, Toronto, Canada
Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert, Federal Council of Churches, U. S. A.
The Bishop of Chichester
The Rev. Dr. Hutchison Cockburn, Dunblane Cathedral, Scotland
The Most Rev. Archbishop Germanos, Metropolitan of Thyateira
Dr. Fred F. Goodsell, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Boston, U. S. A.
Pasteur Henry-Louis Henriod, General Secretary, Universal Christian Council for Life and Work
Canon L. Hodgson, Winchester, General Secretary, Faith and Order Movement
Miss Eleanora Iredale, Life and Work
Dr. Alphons Koechlin, Vice-President, World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations
Dr. Hanns Lilje, Germany
The Rev. W. F. Lofthouse, Principal, Handsworth College, Birmingham
Sir Walter Moberly, Chairman, University Grants Committee, London
Dr. John R. Mott, Chairman, International Missionary Council

The Rev. Dr. Lewis S. Mudge, Presbyterian Church of the U. S. A.
Bishop G. Ashton Oldham, Bishop of Albany, U. S. A.
Dr. J. H. Oldham, International Missionary Council, Chairman, Research Commission of the Oxford Conference
Bishop Edward L. Parsons, Bishop of California
The Rev. William Paton, Secretary, International Missionary Council
Dr. Hans Schönfeld, Director, Research Department of the Universal Christian Council
The Rev. Canon Tissington Tatlow, D.D., Rector of St. Edmund the King, Lombard Street, London E. C.
Dr. Reinold von Thadden, Germany
Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, General Secretary, World's Student Christian Federation
The Most Rev. the Archbishop of York
Professor Stefan Zankov, Sofia
Professor Dr. F. Zilka, Czechoslovakia
General-Superintendent Dr. Zoellner, Germany

Except for the three German members — of whom one had died and another was under arrest — and Professor F. Zilka, who was ill, all of these were present when the committee met for a three-day session on July 8, 9 and 10, 1937, at Westfield College, Hampstead, London. The Reverend Dr. William P. Merrill of New York, chairman of the Church Peace Union, was by invitation also present part of the time.

Such a group could bring to the consideration of practical ways of fostering Christian unity and union wide experience and many points of view nationally, ecclesiastically and philosophically. In presenting their recommendations both at Oxford and at Edinburgh, Dr. Temple pointed out that when, after a year of correspondence and preliminary discussion, the committee met at Westfield College, the members did not believe that they could come to any general agreement. When therefore they presently

found themselves in unanimous support of the plan for a world council to embrace what is now the work of two parallel but separate movements, there remained no room for doubt that the Spirit of God was guiding their deliberations. To believe anything else would seem almost to make a mockery of the Christian faith that He does so guide those whose minds and hearts are open to his leading.

Now for the plan itself: It contemplates a World Council of Churches functioning through a general assembly of approximately two hundred representatives appointed directly by the cooperating churches and meeting every five years. There would also be a central committee, of approximately sixty members, likewise representative of the churches, meeting annually as the executive of the general assembly. The council would have " no power to legislate for the churches or to commit them to action without their consent." Its functions, as provisionally defined, would include the following:

" To carry on the work of the Faith and Order and the Life and Work movements; to make it easier for the churches to act together; to promote cooperation in study; to further the growth of ecumenical consciousness in the churches; to call world conferences on specific subjects as occasion requires."

There would be two special commissions, one for the further study of Faith and Order subjects, the other for the study of Life and Work subjects.

Let us go back to Oxford for a few minutes and see how the idea impressed the delegates there and why they supported it so heartily. Several of the speakers to whom the conference listened in its opening week suggested the need of action for the creation of a more comprehensive world organization. What seemed to many one of the most

searching and practical suggestions made came from Dr. Cavert of New York. After showing what immense importance attaches to effective unity in the life of contemporary Christianity, he declared: " If Christians are really animated by one spirit, there must be some body through which the spirit can be manifested and made effective in the world. The universal community of believers must be enabled to think and act as a community, not merely as national segments. The church today lacks the ecumenical organization which would fit it to exercise its true international power."

The archbishop, whose support of the proposal has already been mentioned, displayed genuine statesmanship and evidenced intense conviction as he argued for the sort of action which the Committee of Thirty-five had envisaged and which he believed " would bestow upon the church an organ it sorely needs."

After this preliminary presentation the proposal was thoroughly discussed in gatherings of groups representing each a different area. More than two hundred American church leaders, for example, met at St. Columbo's Church to discuss this proposal and kindred matters from the American point of view. The Continental delegates met by themselves for the same purpose, as did the leaders of the Eastern churches. Numerous differences of course emerged; various modifications in plan and procedure were suggested and some doubts were raised; but on the whole there was in the larger body the same surprising unanimity that had appeared in the smaller. The Continental delegates, " being persuaded that everything which manifests before the world the unity of the body of Christ is in accordance with the will of God," greeted " with deep joy the prospect of a union of the two ecumenical movements." The American delegates spoke to the same effect:

"We approve the report in principle with the understanding that the necessary details will be worked out by the various parties to the plan and submitted to the churches for their approval." The Orthodox delegates had some misgivings, but they too supported in general the proposed council, recognizing that it would bring into being an agency which the late ecumenical patriarch, supreme head of the Eastern church, had himself strongly desired and specifically recommended.

Toward the end of the second week a further session, the outcome of which has already been described in chapter two, brought the debate at Oxford to a conclusion. The addresses on the subject represented every major division of the church throughout the world, save of course the Roman Catholic, whose representatives at both Oxford and Edinburgh were by their own choice only observers and not participants. Particularly striking as evidence of the dawning of a new day in world Christianity was the suggestion, made by the Bishop of Christchurch, New Zealand, a Briton, that the natural affiliation of Australia and New Zealand is with the lands of the Pacific. He felt that in a regional organization constituent to the world council it would be well to link the Anglo-Saxon churches of his part of the world not with the West but with the younger churches of the East. Commenting on this suggestion, the Indian Bishop of Dornakal, Dr. Azariah, expressed anxiety lest insufficient attention be paid the representation of the Oriental churches, which because they are so far removed in space are often left out of account by the stronger and older churches of the West.

One point stressed by the Archbishop of York and others was the freedom afforded by the plan. No church would be associated with the new council save on its own initiative. National bodies likewise would be assured complete

autonomy by federal organization and representation. The archbishop also affirmed explicitly that the council should not be thought of as anti-Roman. The great Roman Church, he said, would have been warmly welcomed had its leaders seen fit to associate it with the non-Roman churches in this time of great emergency for the Christian faith as a whole. They would be warmly welcomed if at any time in the future they saw their way to cooperating in advancing the work of Christ in the world. "But," he concluded, "in the meantime we cannot concede that their inability to cooperate with us should hinder us from an attempt to cooperate more effectively with one another."

All this deliberation and discussion resulted, as will be remembered, in affirmative action, with only two dissenting votes. In accordance with the proposal, the business committee of the Oxford Conference at its final session appointed seven men who, together with a similar group to be appointed at Edinburgh, were to communicate the plan to the churches and to put it provisionally into effect pending acceptance and ratification by the churches. Those chosen at Oxford were:

From Great Britain
  The Bishop of Chichester
  Dr. J. H. Oldham
From the Orthodox Church
  Archbishop Germanos
From the continent of Europe
  Pasteur Marc Boegner, France
  Bishop Marahrens, Germany
From America
  Professor William Adams Brown
  Dr. John R. Mott

Alternates for these seven were named, as follows:

Sir Walter Moberly
Dr. M. E. Aubrey

The Bishop of Novi-Sad
Dr. Alphons Koechlin
Archbishop Eidem
Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert
Honorable Charles P. Taft

Since it would be confusing to separate this list from that of the men chosen at Edinburgh I shall disregard chronology and say now that the corresponding appointees at Edinburgh were:

From Great Britain
The Archbishop of York
Dr. George F. Barbour, Scotland
From the Orthodox Church
Professor Georges Florovsky
From the continent of Europe
Professor S. F. H. J. Berkelbach van der Sprenkel, Holland
Professor Jens Norregaard, Norway
From America
The Right Rev. George Craig Stewart
President J. Ross Stevenson

Here too alternates were named, as follows:

Canon Leonard Hodgson
Professor George S. Duncan
Dean Ingve Brilioth
Professor Bela Vasady
Archimandrite Cassian
Professor A. R. Wentz
The Very Rev. George C. Pidgeon

Let me now record some of the important points in the Edinburgh debate which resulted in the appointment of these seven representatives to carry on with the Oxford contingent. The text of the proposal had been before the conference for some time, and the all but unanimous favorable action of the Oxford Conference upon it had been widely

discussed; hence the Edinburgh delegates lost no time in launching into a careful debate of the proposal from the point of view of the Faith and Order movement.

This movement is quite different in nature from the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work. The latter, as its name implies, was created for united action in practical application of Christianity in social situations; the former was created for the sole purpose of exploring the ways to organic union of the churches. Despite the fact that both bodies derive their being and authority directly from the churches, Life and Work has had a somewhat less distinctively ecclesiastical status from a technical point of view. It was designed for cooperative action in a definite field of work, while Faith and Order was established for debate on one special problem: theology and church government. One movement inevitably had a good deal of contact with the nonecclesiastical world — governments, secular movements, international organizations, and cultural institutions such as colleges and bodies devoted to research in cognate fields; the other dealt exclusively with churches, through their official governments alone.

Many spoke in support of the plan for a world council. Its chief opponent, Dr. Headlam, bishop of Gloucester, felt that if carried out it would endanger rather than advance the work of Faith and Order, in which he frankly said he was exclusively interested. He feared that it would be impossible for a world council to refrain from action on social questions which for some might prove a difficulty and an embarrassment. He urged with eloquence and evident deep conviction that nothing be done to disturb the present organization of the ecumenical movement. Despite the fact that his views were shared by very few, the utmost courtesy and consideration were shown him

and perhaps the most hearty applause of the conference greeted him when he arose to put his case. I mention this incident as an indication of the spirit in which the work of the conference proceeded even when sharp differences emerged.

If you refer to the quotations from the report of Section IV in the preceding chapter, you will note that the final recommendation has to do with the world council. You will recall that this section of the conference studied the problem of the steps next to be taken toward unity. In the opinion of the delegates who participated in the preparation of this report there was every reason to believe that the proposed council would further the cause of *union* by demonstrating the possibilities of *unity*. Dr. Mott, commenting on the report, said that of all the findings this last was the most strategic. Through a world council alone would it be possible to carry out all the other recommendations. He reminded the delegates that after the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910 twelve years were needed to work out a world organization of the mission boards and the churches in mission lands — the International Missionary Council. Once it had been established, however, there developed a degree of unity in this great field of Christian activity such as had not been dreamed of when the process was begun. Even if it took as long — and he did not think it would — he felt that it was worth while to try to build up a comprehensive World Council of Churches to carry forward in a worthy manner the work done at the second Faith and Order and the second Life and Work conferences.

Dr. William Adams Brown, who is president of the Universal Christian Council on Life and Work and has also long been identified with the Faith and Order movement, spoke most emphatically in favor of the plan. He received

tremendous applause when at the conclusion of his remarks he turned smilingly to the Bishop of Gloucester, who sat near him, with this appeal: " If my old and dear friend, the Bishop of Gloucester, would help us to make this council the thing it ought to be, and to guard against the dangers which he thinks may be encountered, then he will meet a very deep feeling of expectation among the people of our churches and do a great service to the cause of Jesus Christ."

The Archbishop of York, meeting the various criticisms which had been made, called attention to the fact that when constituted the new council would have commissions for carrying forward the specific tasks of both the present movements. Thus persons not in the council could nevertheless be represented, as they are at present, in the individual undertakings, which would retain a degree of autonomy sufficient for the effective prosecution of their distinctive tasks. Such persons might also be appointed to commissions from church bodies which for any reason did not wish to adhere to the central body.

He called attention to the interest shown by many in making the world council even more inclusive — i.e., by relating to it or possibly even including within it more of the present world Christian organizations, such as the World Alliance and the International Missionary Council — and pointed out that the responsible officers of these movements, none of which is constituted basically through the appointment of delegates by the churches as churches, had been consulted, that the closest possible relations with them would be maintained, and that the way was open for them to come into an associated relationship with the world council if they desired to do so. With a touch of humor he remarked that on the financial side the simpler form of organization ought to prove attractive, since it is always easier to present one cause than two to those who

are constantly being asked for funds to carry on the work of the church.

On the whole, to those of us who have had long experience with complex church organizations representing all the world, it seems little short of miraculous that practical unanimity was reached on this vital question at two such gatherings. It is worth pointing out that the only opposition which appeared in the voting — three votes — came from one communion, the Anglican, whose numerous other delegates, including the two English primates, supported the idea. As I mentioned when recording the vote of Oxford, even the leader of the opposition there changed his mind in view of certain modifications made in the plan by the Committee of Thirty-five, and voted affirmatively at Edinburgh.

The special committee of sixty delegates which had been set up early in the conference under the chairmanship of Dr. J. Ross Stevenson, chairman of the American section of the Faith and Order movement, reported unanimously in favor of the plan, on the understanding that the following safeguards would be incorporated in the final proposals:

(a) That the World Council's commission on Faith and Order shall in the first instance be the continuation committee appointed by this conference.

(b) In any further appointments made by the council to membership of the commission on Faith and Order the persons appointed shall always be members of the churches which fall within the terms of the Faith and Order invitation as addressed "to all Christian bodies throughout the world which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour."

(c) The work of the commission on Faith and Order shall be carried on under the general care of a theological secretariat appointed by the commission in consultation with the council and acting in close cooperation with other secretariats of the council. The council shall make adequate financial provision

for the work of the commission after consultation with the commission.

(d) In matters of common interest to all the churches and those pertaining to Faith and Order, the council shall always proceed in accordance with the basis on which this conference on Faith and Order was called and is being conducted.

(e) The World Council shall consist of official representatives of the churches participating.

The decision, as I have said, revealed only one negative vote cast at the time of the presentation of the report by Dr. Stevenson.

Following the two conferences, the special provisional "Committee of Fourteen" met in London and organized, the Archbishop of York being chairman. They developed plans for carrying out the momentous mandate given them by the official action of the representatives of one hundred and twenty-two denominations of the Christian church throughout the world. Since the committee's action is clearly provisional and depends upon the action taken by the denominations, they arranged to send a letter of invitation to all those churches now participating in the Life and Work or Faith and Order movements.

A preliminary conference of official representatives of the churches is to convene in Holland in May, 1938, to draft a constitution for the world council. This group will likewise plan for the maintenance of the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work and the World Conference on Faith and Order in the period which must intervene before the new organization, which is to embrace them both, receives official authorization from the churches and is launched through the convening of the first general assembly.

To make this provisional conference sufficiently representative without giving it unwieldy proportions is difficult. So many communions are involved. But it has been

suggested that its membership be constituted as follows: Nine delegates from Great Britain; eighteen from the continent of Europe; nine from the Eastern Orthodox churches; six from the younger churches (to be selected with the help of the International Missionary Council); six from Africa, Australasia and areas not otherwise represented; and twelve from North America. The method of selection of the last group is to be worked out jointly by the American section of the Life and Work and Faith and Order movements. This would make a total of sixty persons — not too many for effective work.

Thus is given an impressive answer to those who affirm that " the churches never do anything but talk about unity; they do not try seriously to overcome their disastrous divisions." Thus is opened a new chapter in Christian history. God grant that it may not be too late!

As one looks back upon the Oxford and Edinburgh conferences the question naturally arises: What meaning and practical promise has all this for the church and the world? We have already agreed that the effectiveness of what was done cannot now be judged. The process of bringing to full expression such events is involved and far-reaching. The holding of these world conferences, however successfully, does not mean that the pagan forces of fascism and the atheistic antireligiousness of communism have been met and defeated — though to hear some enthusiasts talk one might think that this is the case.

But it does mean that the Christians of the world have won certain priceless advantages in their common struggle. The first of these — although it may seem strange to say it — is the simple fact that at Oxford and Edinburgh the outstanding leaders of the world's churches met for intimate fellowship and personal acquaintance. It would be easy

to underestimate the importance of the fact. People talk about the futility of conferences, yet in the same breath they exclaim, " Why don't the Christians of the world get together! " As if they could, merely by correspondence — Christians who live in sixty lands and use some hundreds of languages! Human limitations being what they are, the physical contact in friendly personal meeting, under the right conditions, of the people responsible for directing the work of the churches, is absolutely indispensable to complete spiritual meeting. There are of course many things today which bring together people from all parts of the world; but not often do so many from so great a number of nations stay together to think and work for a solid month. Still more seldom does it happen that their purpose is to find and understand the mind of Christ. When that is the objective — and it was — something very dynamic takes place, and seeds are sown which will surely bear fruit in unexpected ways through the years.

The church come together in its representatives at Oxford and Edinburgh was definitely constructive, not apologetic, although it was duly humble and repentant for its failures in the past. It dug deep down to the foundations of its life and did not concern itself with superficial matters. It stood before the world once more as affirming not *a* way, but *the* way of life — not ideals merely, but reality.

Before the conferences met many said that the one would eclipse the other, or that one would seem like an anticlimax after the other. No such thing happened. As one very wise observer said afterwards: " Instead of eclipsing Edinburgh, Oxford has vitalized it. By defining the task of the church in terms of Christianity's social responsibility, Oxford has turned the church's mind inward upon its own condition. . . . It became clear that the church could not assume a functional responsibility of the magnitude

envisaged at Oxford while its faith and order were broken into sectarian compartments. . . . A sectarian church could not mend the sectarianism of society."

The areas of agreement disclosed at Edinburgh may not seem significant to the superficial thinker or to the person unacquainted with the extent and rigidity of Christendom's divisions. But to the historian or competent observer they will be full of tremendous significance for the future. Agreements like that reached concerning the meaning of grace are no mere incidents in the abstract debating of a few theological professors. They are signs of a new life in the church. The whole of the Christian gospel for a world of sin and selfishness and war is bound up with this concept of divine grace. No wonder the men who after careful and exhaustive debate drew up that agreement were moved to rise and sing at the end of their labors, "Now thank we all our God!" The church throughout the world may well re-echo those words.

One feels disappointment over Edinburgh's failure to come to a greater measure of agreement with regard to the conception of the church's ministry and sacraments. But the areas of disagreement are now clearly defined, and are shown to be of such a character as not to hinder a vast increase in cooperative or federal unity even while they remain a bar to organic unity.

No student of the problem of the church in conflict with totalitarian states can fail to see the direct contribution which Oxford has made to the strengthening of Christianity at this crucial point. There still remain in every land those who are willing to compromise — and who do not see what that sort of compromise entails in the end — but against them now stands the witness of the representatives of the church throughout the world, declaring: Absolutely no! Compromise with the claims of the totalitarian

state can never be made to harmonize with recognition of the sovereignty of God or with the inclusiveness of the loyalty of the Christian to his Lord.

What was said at Oxford concerning the relation of the church and the economic order is of striking importance. In many parts of the church the danger has been that discontent with the failures and shortcomings of one economic system would lead to complete identification of Christianity with some other, presumably better, system. Oxford says through the declaration of its section in this field: "Christianity can never be completely identified with any secular economic system. The tendency to identify some social or political utopia with the kingdom of God must be checked by the realization that the church preaches a different gospel. While it believes in and expects a juster order here on earth, and strives to realize it, it knows that complete realization of that ideal requires that it take into account the unseen world as well." If its implications are understood and its relevance shown to men and women everywhere, that report will be a standard for the churches of the world for many generations to come.

The same kind of significance attaches to the statements dealing with race, education, and war. They register new high levels for united Christian thinking. A few churches here and there have gone further than do these pronouncements. But never has there been any such universal agreement with respect to the crucial problems involved. Time will demonstrate, I firmly believe, that we have here something of solid worth to the church of tomorrow.

But beyond and behind all these deliverances, as a singularly moving element in the deeper life of both great councils, were certain spiritual attitudes. Humility and repentance, as I have intimated, were very evident. Men of such stature as the world calls great were led to agree in

the confession of the sins which have made the church weak in the face of a challenging world. Someone has said that the modern world has inverted the ancient adoration of the saints into inclination to confess the sins of its forefathers. But this mood I speak of was not one which assigned blame; it accepted blame. Yet it was not defeatism, nor abject self-depreciation, nor despair. It was healthy and wholesome. Out of it grew willingness to recognize as never before the utter dependence of the creation upon the Creator, which led to a tremendous emphasis upon the sovereignty of God and the absolute lordship of his Son Jesus Christ.

And hence arose confidence, and the mood of affirmation — not arrogant and self-assured, but indomitable, calm, and genuinely spiritual. There has always been lip-service of the idea that in Christ are the answers to the world's need. It had become commonplace. But at Oxford and Edinburgh emerged a new understanding of that idea, an exhilarating realization that *our Christianity is true!* When one remembers the attempts to discount the reality of the gospel which have characterized recent years — with too much help at times from church leaders themselves — one appreciates that this is something to think about.

Nor was this confidence based upon wishful thinking. It issued from a collective experience, vivid and convincing, of the presence of God with power in his church and of his will that men regain and keep " the unity of the faith in the bonds of peace." No doubt remained in any mind but that the nearer we come to the great Head of the church the more strongly do we sense the reality of the oneness of that invisible church which is more than all the churches. In other words, there was given new evidence of the power common worship has to bring the broken family of God into vital fellowship.

As a consequence of their trust in God the conferences came to see clearly that our disintegrating world could be reintegrated by the unifying forces which God is prepared to release through a more united church. Christians have held the world together in the past. They could hold it together once more if they were ready to fulfill the conditions imposed by the very nature of the task. That the delegates came to the conference talking about their churches and went away talking about *the Church* is a sign that they had seen this vision and had committed themselves to realizing it.

The unity actually gained was unity of attitude — and unity of attitude is most important, because it must be won before any other kind of unity can really be achieved. It is not intellectual primarily, although of course there are intellectual elements in it; but rather it is something which engages a man's will and spirit and transcends his ordinary reasoning processes. It is a sort of spiritual instinct manifesting itself in the whole orientation of personality and life, both individual and social. If you ask for an illustration of this unity of attitude I would remind you of the agreement unexpectedly reached at both conferences with regard to the policy and doctrine of the church. Look once again at Oxford's Message and Edinburgh's Affirmation of Unity. No stranger from another planet, had he attended the closing session of either conference, would have felt that there were any fundamental differences among the participating churches. He would have found in the general approach to all questions — those on which there were differences as well as those on which complete agreement was reached — that brotherliness and commonalty of interest which are the sign and seal not of uniformity but of true unity.

But in both councils there was also a consciousness of

imminent danger, though it appeared more clearly at Oxford than at Edinburgh. The sense of dependence on God did not dull the sense of human responsibility and mission. Indolence, indifference, procrastination, halfheartedness, were seen as sins in the life of the church, barriers to the flow of divine impulses in the life of mankind. More than one discerning leader of the church spoke a warning: " Christians, unite or perish! "

With this warning ringing in their ears the delegates made provision for constant correlation of world-wide Christian activity and for promotion of unity in the organic and spiritual life of the churches. At no other ecclesiastical world gathering in modern times, save possibly at Edinburgh in 1910, has so much thoughtful and prayerful consideration been given this vital necessity. The unexpected willingness on the part of the delegates to be concrete and practical was not a sign of abandonment of things spiritual, but rather a convincing evidence of the realism with which they faced the conditions of the life of the spirit in the world of men. For the physical body of man the Lord gives daily bread. For the physical body of the church provision must also be made — by securing for it what will build it up in new unity and renewed creativeness.

The conspicuous cooperation of lay men and women in the thought processes leading up to Oxford in particular, and the readiness of many of the world's most distinguished thinkers in university, economic, and government circles to take their stand uncompromisingly with the church, were factors of no mean importance in the success of both conferences. Such a thing has not happened in modern times on the same scale. It seems to promise a new day when so-called " intellectuals," at least in democratic lands, will put their efforts into strengthening the forces of Christian enlightenment and liberty instead of ignoring or

opposing them, as even the nominal churchmen among scholars and writers have too often done in recent years.

These facts should not be forgotten. Too long has it been assumed that the making of the church of tomorrow is the task of the clergy alone. Now once more, as in the days of the early church, it is clearly seen that unless and until lay responsibility is recognized and lay cooperation encouraged there can be no real progress in the renewing of the life of the church or — even more important — in the increase of its impact upon the hostile elements in the social and international orders.

As for the youth representatives of many lands who were officially present at the councils of their elders, by their own testimony they were enabled to understand as never before why the world-wide expression of Christianity requires the church and what it can hope to accomplish if it is prepared to accept God's plan for its unified development. These young men and women worked together through many patient weeks in the preparation of plans for the first world-wide church youth conference to be held in 1939 in Amsterdam, Holland, under the auspices of the World Alliance for Friendship through the Churches, of other ecumenical organizations in special areas, such as student work, the Sunday school, and the Christian associations, and of the organization that will by then doubtless have been constituted as the World Council of Churches.

Still another element of new and real import in the two conferences was the relationship developed between them and the world missionary enterprise. Logically, of course, all these movements are inseparable. But in the past there has been all too wide a gulf between them. How different the situation now! At both conferences the International Missionary Council — born, you will re-

member, at Edinburgh in 1910 — was conspicuously represented through such of its leaders as John R. Mott, J. H. Oldham, William Paton, A. L. Warnshuis, and many of their associates from East and West. The conferences kept constantly in mind the significance of their work for the International Missionary Council's next meeting, which is to be held in India in 1938, thanks to Japan's war against China, which makes it impossible for the meeting to convene at Hangchow, as originally planned. It seems safe to predict that once the World Council of Churches is organized one of its first steps will be to establish intimate connections with this council.

Another accomplishment of the conferences was the setting up of new plans for the education of the ministry of the future in ways that will enormously increase their sensitiveness to the need of overcoming sectionalism, denominationalism, and nationalism in a world Christianity of dynamic, growing power.

Again, the activity centering in the conferences has brought forth a number of painstaking studies in fields of intense interest and common concern — studies made not by individuals working singly, or by denominations, or even by national groups, but by the ablest Christian minds of all the world working together under a concerted plan toward a single purpose. That such literature has never before existed — save in the field of foreign missions — everyone is aware. For those in every land who desire to know what the best Christian thought of the age has to say about the fundamental relationships of society and the duties of the individual who would play his part in building a better world, the conferences have provided a store of wisdom not likely soon to be surpassed either in soundness or in relevance to life.

Finally, the chancellories of Europe, the universities, newspaper offices and radio broadcasting centers, have given evidence of new stirrings of interest in a Christianity which by many signs shows that it is awakening to the importance of a kind of unity which it has not possessed for centuries. The ether waves, the cables and the press have carried to waiting millions words fraught with new promise, new hope, new ideas, all centered in the one hope of the world for fellowship and justice and peace — the Lord Jesus Christ.

But the real answer to the question, What will these conferences accomplish? will be given by individual Christians. The pronouncements of Oxford and Edinburgh will be of avail to a sick world only if there are enough men and women who take them seriously and apply their lessons. Such men and women will find ways to make plain their concern for greater unity. They will cease to stress such terms as "Presbyterian," "Baptist," "Congregational," "Methodist," "Episcopalian," "Lutheran," and remember that Christ's followers, of whatever denominational family, are first of all Christians. They will not leave it all to committees or commissions. They will not be content to see things stand still as they are. They will press for action and yet more action, never scorning a forward step, no matter how short, never allowing themselves to be reconciled to anything less than complete unity among Christians.

Thus they will not fail to recognize in their brethren of like purpose, no matter where found, fellow helpers toward the truth and fellow heirs of the kingdom which is God's gift — to be received on earth in its fullness only when from east and west, north and south, from among the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the learned

and the unlettered, there come to appropriate its blessings earnest souls in whom has dawned " the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ " and in whom Christ's prayer " that they all may be one " finds its answer.

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